

THE KHALWA AS AN
ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION
IN THE SUDAN

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

DEDICATION

TO MY FAMILY

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own
composition.

Osman Mohammad Eid

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ABSTRACT

The introduction presents the subject of the thesis - the khalwa as an Islamic educational institution - and outlines the approach to that subject in the thesis. It also gives a brief general introduction to Islamic education so that the khalwa can be seen in that context.

Part I of the thesis presents a history of Islam in the Sudan and the institution of the khalwa until the end of the Funj period. It demonstrates how the unique use of the term khalwa in the Sudan for an Islamic educational institution arose out of Ṣūfism. It presents examples of khalwas during that period in an examination of the khalwas of the Sons of Jabir, Ṣughayrūn, Suwar al-Dhahab and al-Ghubush.

In Part II the development of the khalwa is presented up to the present time. This part examines the khalwas in the Turco-Egyptian period, the period of the Mahdiyya, the Condominium and the present period of National rule. During this time there were certain changes, some temporary and others of a more permanent nature. The Turco-Egyptian period saw the khalwa coming under Government influence in matters of finance, though remaining unchanged in other respects. In the period of the Mahdiyya there were drastic changes in the content of education, but afterwards the khalwa returned to its traditional form. It was in the Condominium period that the Government tried to bring the khalwa within the newly emerging state system of education. Differences

in objectives and methods led to the failure of this policy. The National Government, after independence, has also used the khalwa as an instrument of educational policy. There are then detailed examples of individual khalwas during this period. Of great note is the contribution of the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāi at Hamishkorayb as an Islamicising and civilizing agent of social change.

Part III deals with an analysis of the different aspects of the khalwa as an educational institution - its teachers, students, methods of teaching, subjects, programmes of study, discipline, administration and financing.

The conclusion shows that khalwa education has changed very little but that there is scope within the khalwa system for it to continue to make a valuable contribution to Islamic education in the Sudan.

TRANSLITERATION

The system of transliteration followed is illustrated below:

Arabic letter	Trans-literation	Arabic letter	Trans-literation
أ	ʾ	ح	t
إ	a	ظ	z
ب	b	ع	c
ت	t	غ	gh
ث	th	ف	f
ج	j	ق	q
خ	h	ك	k
ح	kh	ل	l
د	d	م	m
ذ	dh	ن	n
ر	r	ه	h
ز	z	و	w
س	s	ي	y
ش	sh	ة	a
ص	s	(ö in <u>idāfa</u> becomes t)	
ض	d		

Short vowels:

ا	a
و	u
ي	i

Long vowels:

آ	ā
ؤ	ū
ي	ī

Diphthongs:

او	aw
اي	ay
ئي	iy
وي	uw

N.B. Names of places, towns, villages are left in their common English spelling in the Sudan.

ABBREVIATIONS

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a paper, Khartoum, 1979.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the khalwa as an educational institution in the Sudan. In modern times in the Sudan this is generally taken to mean a Qur'ānic school. However, it can involve more than that. The term khalwa seems to be unique to the Sudan, for this kind of educational institution. How it acquired such a name will be discussed later in the thesis. Before discussing education in the Sudan, and in particular the khalwas, it would be useful to survey briefly the developments in Islamic education prior to the emergence of the Muslim Sudan.

After this, the thesis will be divided into three parts: Part One will deal with the emergence of the khalwa as an educational institution during the Funj era.⁽¹⁾ The main source on this period is Dayfallāh's al-Ṭabaqāt. The importance of this source lies in the fact that the author was himself a faqīh, a descendant of fuqahā' and, more important, an eye-witness of the latter part of the Funj period, and a chronicler of the whole era.⁽²⁾ The nearly two hundred and eighty biographies compiled

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1. The Funj period extended from 910/1504 to 1236/1821 (al-Ṭabaqāt, p.40; MacMichael, vol.II, p.220; Hillelson, SNR, p.204.
 2. Al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Nūr Dayfallāh, the author of al-Ṭabaqāt, was born and lived at al-Ḥalfāya, the capital of the kingdom of the 'Abdallāb (the viceroys to the Funj kings of Sennar) between 1139/1727 and 1224/1809-10 (al-Ṭabaqāt, p.18).

by the author of al-Tabaqāt fortunately "contain, as a rule, details of the place of birth, characteristics, education, career and death of each holy man [or scholar] with special mention of his manifestation of miraculous powers, his teachers, those taught by him, subjects and books of study and reference to the methods of teaching, the sources of financing and many remarks made concerning the biographies by other [people]."⁽¹⁾

The biographies of al-Tabaqāt vary in length; whereas those on the Ṣūfī saints were given considerable space in the book, others on ordinary scholars in some cases were treated in a couple of sentences.

The principal source of information of the author of al-Tabaqāt was oral tradition which seems to have been preserved amongst the descendants and disciples of each holy man, but whenever he found access to written materials he made full use of them and he freely quoted from letters and other documents.⁽²⁾

Hence, al-Tabaqāt is believed to have been a mirror of the different aspects of the Sudanese of the Funj period - of their beliefs and practices, both the genuine and the superstitious. In confirmation of this the editor of the present copy of

1. MacMichael, vol.II, p.218.

2. Ibid.

al-Tabaqāt⁽¹⁾ stated, in reply to some of his critics:

"I would like to confirm that the book of al-Tabaqāt of wad (son of) Dayfallāh which records the history of the class of awliyā', the sālihīn (pious men) and the fuqahā' of the Funj era is a mir'ā sādiqa (a genuine reflection) of the religious, spiritual, cultural and social life of the Sudanese, and a genuine record of their religious beliefs during that period - whatever we might think of it."⁽²⁾

Hence, the invaluable importance of al-Tabaqāt as the source on Muslim education of that era. The author, however, does not arrange his biographical notes in a chronological manner - according to their emergence in time - but rather in a rough alphabetical order, which makes it somewhat difficult to sort out the succession and the teacher-student chain of relationship. The book was also written in a mixture of classical and colloquial Arabic of the Sudanese at the time.

Part Two of the thesis will be concerned with the history of the khalwa up to the present time. Here the writer has relied mainly on the extensive field work he has conducted and on his observations when visiting, in November-December 1981, a large

1. The present book al-Tabaqāt has been ably edited by Dr. Yusuf Fadl Hasan, a professor of history at the University of Khartoum, in 1972.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, "Introduction to the second impression", 1974, p. hā(ح).

number of khalwas, large and small, old and new, in the different parts of the country. As a result, he has obtained a wealth of knowledge about the history of the khalwas and their situation up to the present time.⁽¹⁾ In addition, he has also made use of the supplementary literature written on the khalwa in the Sudan - mainly current reports. The present situation of khalwas in the Sudan, as will be illustrated in the thesis, seems to confirm in many ways what the author of al-Tabaqāt has recorded.

Part Three of the study will be a critical analysis of the khalwa as an educational institution in action, in the Sudan.

A word should be said about some of the terms used in the study.

- The term al-faqīh has been used to denote both the teachers of the Qur'ān and (mainly) the teacher of 'ilm (religious sciences) at the advanced stage, when discussing the Funj and Turco-Egyptian periods.
- In reference to the Condominium and National periods, the term al-fakī has been used to denote the Qur'ān teacher.
- The term al-Shaykh has been used throughout the thesis to

1. See the list of khalwas visited by the writer and khalwa teachers interviewed in appendix III

denote the Ṣūfī superior of the khalwa.

- The term khalīfa has been used in reference to the administrative head of the khalwa centre.

Although mosques were used in the Sudan as educational institutions before and parallel to the khalwa, yet because of the dominance of the latter the term khalwa has been almost exclusively used as would be illustrated later in the thesis.

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General Review of the Development of Muslim Educational Institutions:

Islamic education owes its origin and the cause for its subsequent perpetuation to the Message of Islam as enshrined in the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet of Islam. Education as a vital means in the dissemination of the Islamic teachings for the guidance and the development of the righteous man in this world and for his salvation in the Hereafter has always occupied a very high position in the Islamic thought and practice. The Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet emphasise the importance of education.⁽¹⁾

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1. (a) For references from the Qur'ān, see for example the verses (v.) in the following suras (s.): s.96 v.1-5; s.58 v.11; s.39 v.9; s.35 v.20; s.20 v.114; s.62 v.2; s.21 v.159.
(b) For examples from the Sunna see: al-Bukhārī, vol.III, bāb al-‘ilm; Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, vol.I, p.406; A. ‘Alī, A Manual of Hadīth, p.39, quoting Mishkat 2; Ḥajjī Khalīfa, Kashf al-Zunūn, vol.I, p.32.

During his lifetime the Prophet developed the use of the mosque as an educational institution and used it to instruct his Companions in the Qur'ān, hadīth and the rituals.⁽¹⁾

His Companions followed his example and embarked on teaching and learning about their religion at the mosques, too.⁽²⁾ Across the ages the mosque has continued to be used for this purpose by the Muslims.

As for the education of children he has laid the responsibility for that, as well as their upbringing, on the shoulders of their parents - as a religious duty.⁽³⁾ Accordingly, the State made no provision for children's education.⁽⁴⁾

Nevertheless, through private pious voluntary effort, or through hired service, children's education was widely diffused. It was conducted first at the homes, then at special elementary institutions known as the kuttāb (pl. katātīb) or maktab

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1. See al-Bukhārī, Sahīh al-Bukhārī, vol.VIII, sections 30 and 42; S.E.I., p.301.
 2. Al-Kattānī, vol.II, p.218; Ḥamīdallāh, "Educational System in the Time of the Prophet", Islamic Culture, 1939, p.55.
 3. See al-hadīth reported in Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, vol.II, no.1317.
 4. Al-Qabisi/al-Ahwānī, p.255.

(pl. makātib).⁽¹⁾

Being private, various types of such institutions emerged - reflecting the social and financial status of the parents.

These were the following:

(a) The kuttab for teaching writing and reading:

This type of kuttab had a non-Islamic origin and could be traced back to the Jahilīyya (pre-Islamic) period. Nevertheless, it seems to have been perpetuated under Islam for centuries - as could be evidenced by the writings on Muslim education in al-Mashriq (Islamic East) by Ibn Jubayr (d.614)⁽²⁾, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa,⁽³⁾ and Ibn Khaldūn,⁽⁴⁾ and as was referred to by Shalaby.⁽⁵⁾

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1. The terms kuttāb and maktab are derived from the Arabic root kataba (to write). According to Ibn Manẓūr al-maktab was the place of the kuttab; al-maktab (pl. makātib) and the kuttāb (pl. katatīb) were the places of instruction. However, according to al-Mubarrid, Ibn Manẓūr states, al-maktab was the place of instruction, al-mukattib was al-muʿallim (the teacher); al-kuttab were al-sibyān (the children). (Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, vol.X, p.699). According to Makdisī, both maktab and the kuttāb were schools for elementary education (Makdisī, G., The Rise of Colleges, p.19).
 2. Ibn Jubayr, p.272.
 3. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, p.134.
 4. Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, p.474.
 5. Shalaby, pp.16-18.

(b) The mosque-kuttāb for dictating the Qur'ān orally:

At first children seem to have attended mosque-ḥalqas with their parents (in addition to being taught by their parents at home) in order to learn the Qur'ān, as was alluded to by Ibn Ḥazm.⁽¹⁾

Later, when Malik was reported to have forbidden children from being taught at the mosques lest they might defile its floors and walls⁽²⁾, special rooms were attached to the mosques to serve as kuttāb.

Nevertheless, mosques continued to accommodate children's kuttābs for teaching the Qur'ān through talqīn (oral dictation).⁽³⁾ Such a phenomenon has been recorded by Ibn Jubayr (d.614 A.H.) on his visit to the mosque of Damascus⁽⁴⁾ and later by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa who also visited the same mosque.⁽⁵⁾

(c) Independent village kuttāb:

With the spread of Islam to the provinces and the expanding need for education for the children of the common people, kuttāb

1. Ibn Ḥazm, p.78.

2. Sahnūn/ al-Ahwānī, p.315.

3. Ibn Jubayr, p.272; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, p.133.

4. Ibn Jubayr, p.272.

5. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, p.133.

schools were established in the villages - independent from mosques. Examples of such kuttābs were that of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95 A.H.) at al-Tā'if,⁽¹⁾ and the one of al-Dahhāk b. Muzāhim (d.105-6/723-4) in Kūfa.⁽²⁾ This type of kuttab seems to have been well established and widespread during the 4th/10th century in al-Maghrib where children had to pay fees.⁽³⁾ What is of significance here was that this type of kuttāb used to teach the Qur'ān together with literacy and other elementary subjects. Indeed, it used to impart compulsory subjects - exemplified in the Qur'ān, the ability to write, spelling, good handwriting, grammatical signs and good recitation of the Qur'ān, in addition to instruction in 'ibādāt and good behaviour.⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, optional subjects were also taught including arithmetic, grammar, Arabic studies and poetry.⁽⁵⁾

By the time of Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 A.H.) however, the kuttāb in al-Maghrib was said to be restricting its efforts to the teaching of the Qur'ān in addition to reading and writing.⁽⁶⁾

1. S.E.I., p.300.

2. Ibid.

3. Saḥnūn/ al-Ahwānī, p.311; al-Qābisī/ al-Ahwānī, pp.284-297.

4. Saḥnūn/ al-Ahwānī, pp.313.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, p.473.

(d) The Palace, or Mu'addib, kuttāb:

This was a superior kuttāb that was set up for the education of the children of the upper class - the Royal families and the notables in the society.

Unlike other types of kuttāb it was conducted at the royal palaces for the princes and conducted also at the respective residences of the notables for their sons.⁽¹⁾

In contrast to the teachers of the other kuttāb schools, the teachers here were highly qualified private teachers who were said to have been of high social and moral status too.⁽²⁾ They were called the mu'addibs (tutors) because they were in charge of promoting the intellectual, moral and other positive qualities in their students.⁽³⁾

The curriculum in these palace katātīb was said to have been richer and more comprehensive than the other types. It was designed by the parent in collaboration with the tutor.⁽⁴⁾

1. Ibn Qutayba, op. cit., pp.166-7.

2. Ibid.

3. Shalaby, p.24.

4. See the advice of Caliph 'Abd al-Malik to the tutor of his sons (Ibn Qutayba, 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, vol.II/5, p.167). See also the instructions of Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd to al-Aḥmar, tutor of his son, Prince Al-Amīn (Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, III, p.307).

This kind of education continued in the Umayyad, 'Abbāsids' and Fāṭimids' courts.⁽¹⁾

(e) Kuttāb schools for the orphans and the poor:

Because children's education seems to have become a professional service that had to be paid for, poor families would obviously be at a disadvantage - and the worst of these seem to have been the orphans. However, to redress the situation of this group positive contribution was reported to have been made by some statesmen and Muslim individuals - as a charitable act by establishing katātīb for the orphans and poor, in their countries.⁽²⁾

This then was the outline of elementary education which seems to have been based on learning the Qur'ān. For those who went on to more advanced subjects, usually religious, learning seems to have depended on men of learning devoting their time to interested scholars at the various specialised mosques (jāmi' or

1. SEI, p.300.

2. a) Yahya al-Barmakī, the wazīr of Harūn al-Rashīd, established a number of such kuttāb schools in 170/781 in Baghdad (al-Jahshiyari, p.177).

b) In Damascus - (Ibn Jubayr, p.272).

c) In Cordova, Andalusia, al-Ḥakam b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān (ruled 350-366) established twenty-seven makātīb for the orphans. (Ibn al-ʿAdhārī, al-Bayān al-Mughrib fī Akhbar al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib, p.240).

d) In Egypt they were numerous (SEI, p.300).

masjid) halqas.⁽¹⁾

As more secular subjects became of interest to relatively small and limited groups, halqas or majlis (circles or councils) were held at the palaces of Caliphs and other notables. Libraries began to be developed to provide facilities for such people and for interested scholars. The most famous of the libraries of the time seems to have been Bayt al-Ḥikma (the house of wisdom) patronized by Caliph al-Māmūn in Baghdad.⁽²⁾

The institutionalisation of more advanced studies in the religious sciences seems to have first appeared in Fāṭimid Egypt where, at the time of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-ʿAzīz, the mosque of al-Azhar was devoted to the use of learned men, in 378/988.⁽³⁾ Then the successor of al-ʿAzīz, his son al-Ḥākim, was reported to have created Dār al-ʿIlm in Cairo in 395 A.H. in which huge amounts of valuable sources and books and rich facilities were assembled for the use of ʿulamā and fuqahā and scholars.⁽⁴⁾

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1. The institution of learning in a jāmiʿ was called a halqa - a study circle - a meeting of students around a professor; hence course, succession of lesson; it also refers to a majlis, a hall where someone in place held meetings, gave lectures, where a professor gave lessons (Makdisī, The Rise of Colleges, p.17; see also ibid., pp.17-22; Shalaby, pp.47-54).
 2. It was initiated originally as a translation centre of, mainly, the Greeks' works into Arabic (see Shalaby, pp.95-111).
 3. Shalaby, p.212.
 4. Al-Maqrīzī, I, pp.458-9.

The Sunnite rulers in Iraq, under the initiative of the Seljuq wazīr Nizām al-Mulk in Baghdad established a network of madrasas,⁽¹⁾ almost exclusively to the dissemination of the Sunnite teachings - and mainly fiqh (Islamic law) of their four main madhāhib. Teachers were appointed, students chosen - and all were endowed by Nizām al-Mulk.⁽²⁾ "He saw clearly the importance of this advanced institution of learning as a place for people determined to be functionaries of the State and leaders of the people. They were moulded on a frankly Sunnite type, and they received in a regular way the necessary Muslim knowledge."⁽³⁾

Beside Nizām al-Mulk, many notables established madrasas in Iraq and elsewhere in the Muslim world - such as the Sunnite ruler Nūr al-Dīn in Syria (541/1146).⁽⁴⁾

A great contribution in this respect was attributed to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Egypt who, following his victory over the Shī'ite rule there, was reported to have established the madrasas and khanqas and paid the 'ulamā' throughout his kingdom that extended

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1. The madrasa was defined as "the Muslim institution of learning par excellence and as such it was a natural development of two previous institutions: the masjid, in its role as a college of law and its nearby khan (residence) of the law students in attendance" (Makdisi, op. cit., p.27).
 2. Shalaby, p.58.
 3. Pederson, J., "Some Aspects of the History of the Madrasa", Islamic Culture, October 1929, p.535.
 4. Shalaby, p.118.

from al-Maghrib to the borders of Iraq, including Yemen, Ḥijāz, Egypt and al-Maghrib.⁽¹⁾ His efforts were continued by his successors.⁽²⁾

Later, however, when the madrasa seems to have been conducting almost the same functions of the mosque - including the daily prayers and the Jum'a, in addition to the teaching functions - the madrasa was said to have lost the battle to the mosque.⁽³⁾ In Cairo, for example, most of the madrasas were said to have decayed while the mosque, such as al-Azhar, once more became the central seat of learning in the Muslim lands, and continued thus till the advent of the modern school.⁽⁴⁾

Parallel with the rise of the madrasa, the Muslim world seems to have witnessed the flourishing and eventually the dominance of Ṣūfism, as was manifested in the Ṣūfī convents -

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1. Al-Suyūṭī, Husn al-Muḥādara fī Akhbār Miṣr wa al-Qāhira, vol.II, p.32.
 2. The Aḡyubids continued from A.D.1171 to 1250 (MacMichael, vol.I, p.174).
 3. Pederson, op. cit., pp.536-7.
 4. Ibid., p.537.

the khānqas, ribāts and zāwiyas.⁽¹⁾ Such Ṣūfī convents were said to have originally started as places providing the Ṣūfis a home

1. The Ṣūfī convents referred to here are:

- i) The Persian khānaqā (pl. khawāniq) - a hostel).
- ii) Ribāt of Arab origin - started as military fortress on the frontier of Islam for men of jihād - then special buildings for the Ṣūfis retained the same name.
- iii) Zāwiya - it was referred to as a hermitage to which a holyman retired and where he lived with his pupils.
- iv) A khalwa was designated the retreat of a single dervish, frequently a cell situated around a mosque square.

For further elaboration on the development and spread of these Ṣūfī convents in the Muslim world, see the following:

- i) Trimingham, The Ṣūfī Orders in Islam, (Oxford 1971), especially pp.17-21, 166-168.
- ii) Al-Yāsīn, for patronisation of Rulers to Ṣūfī convents: khānāqas, ribāts and zāwiyas, pp.61, 63, 67-69, 184-188.
- iii) al-Maqrīzī, vol.I, pp.343, 365 (for Ṣūfī establishments in Egypt under the Ayyubids).
- iv) al-Suyūṭī, Husn al-Muhādara, vol.II, p.34. (For the spread of these convents under the Ayyūbids).
- v) Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, p.43. (For spread of Ṣūfī convents in Cairo, in A.H.725).
- vi) al-Sha'rānī, vol.II (for spread of Ṣūfī convents in Egypt).
- vii) SEI, "Madrasas - section: Monasteries".
- viii) S. Babs Mala, "The Ṣūfī Convents...", Islamic Culture, (1977), pp.51-52.

and place for their devotional exercises⁽¹⁾ and seem to have spread all over the Muslim countries (and to have, later, engaged in the cultivation of learning too).⁽²⁾

By the 7th/13th century, however, Sūfism seems to have spread to almost all parts of the Muslim lands. 90% of the Muslim world was, in one way or another, connected with the Sūfī movement.⁽³⁾ Not only that but Sūfism seems to have had its impact on every walk of life, then.

"Through the influence and activity of Sūfism, the Islamic world was entirely transformed, from the 7th/13th century onward - spiritually, morally, intellectually, imaginatively and even politically."⁽⁴⁾

We are mainly concerned here with the impact of the Sūfī movement on the development of education. What is of relevance to this study was the fact that almost all of the numerous Sūfī establishments (khanqas, ribats and zāwiyas) that emerged with the spread of Sūfism, were said to have been used (in addition to their devotional function) as institutions of learning - especially for the dissemination of Sunnite teachings.

1. See SEI, p.305.

2. See below.

3. Hawwa, Sa'īd, Tarbiyatuna al-Rūhiyya, p.11.

4. Gibb, H., Studies on the Civilization of Islam, p.32.

Since learning and manifestation of piety are inseparable in Islam, learning was often reported to be cultivated in Sūfī convents also.⁽¹⁾

In many ways Sūfī convents seem to have taken over the functions of the institutions of learning.

By the time of the emergence of the Funj Muslim state in the Sudan at the beginning of the 10th/16th century the intellectual situation seems to have declined to its lowest. "Even in Cairo and Istanbul the period was one of great intellectual stagnation - the darkest hour of night between the brilliant day of Baghdad and Spain and the new dawn which began with the 19th century."⁽²⁾

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1. SEI, p.305; Trimingham, The Sūfī Orders in Islam, p.176.
 2. Hillelson, SNR, p.204; al-Qūṣī, p.6; see al-Mu'arrikh al-'Arabī, IV (1977), pp.1-19.

PART I

THE EMERGENCE OF THE KHALWA
AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION
DURING THE FUNJ ERA

CHAPTER ONE

EARLY HISTORY OF ISLAM IN THE SUDAN

The Muslim Sudan is, comparatively, a recent conquest to Islam; it does not properly emerge in the light of history before the 10th/16th century,⁽¹⁾ when the first Muslim state - the Funj kingdom - came into being.⁽²⁾

However, in order to have a better understanding of the cultural situation in the pre-Funj era and to appreciate its impact on the developments that took place in the Funj period, it seems desirable to throw light on the pre-Funj period and to survey, in brief, the historical events of that period.

Prior to the Muslim conquest of Egypt between 17/639 and 19/641 AD⁽³⁾, the region that lay beyond its southern borders - the kingdom of Nubia - was reported to have been under Christian rule. The kingdom of Nubia adopted Christianity in the 6th century⁽⁴⁾ and, according to MacMichael, there were three Christian kingdoms: al-Marīṣ, bordering Egypt, al-Muqarra and 'Alawa.⁽⁵⁾

1. Hillelson, JRAS, p.657.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.40.

3. Holt and Daly, p.15.

4. The Arabs, p.8.

5. MacMichael, vol.I, p.177; cf. p.8.

However, the two main Christian kingdoms were al-Muqarra in the north with Dongola as its capital, and 'Alawa to the south, with Soba as its capital.⁽¹⁾

Within a decade or two of their conquest of Egypt, the Muslim Arabs were reported to have twice overrun the kingdom of al-Muqarra; and in the second, under 'Abdallāh b. Sa'd, to have sacked Dongola, its capital.⁽²⁾

However, it was reported that there was no attempt to annex the region and the Muslims were induced to sign a truce or treaty that became known as the baqt treaty.⁽³⁾

The main terms of that treaty were said to have been the following.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Hillelson, JRAS, p.657.
 2. Al-Maqrīzī, vol.I, p.199; Shuqayr, vol. , p.44.
 3. According to P.M. Holt, the source of the word 'baqt' was Latin "pactum" which means in Hellenestic usage: "a compact of mutual obligation and its connected payments"...and the survival of that Hellenestic term suggests that 'Abdallāh b. Sa'd's invasion did not originate this annual transaction but rather re-established, perhaps after interruption, a trade of longstanding. (Holt and Daly, p.16).
 4. Al-Maqrīzī, vol.I, p.199-202; Shuqayr, vol.I, p.44; MacMichael, vol.I, p.158.

The treaty precluded settlement of either party in the country of the other. However, the Núbians were to provide protection to Muslim travellers and their allies travelling across Nubia.

The Nubians were to take care of the mosque the Muslims had built in the outskirts of Dongola, to allow Muslims to perform their prayer there, and they should cleanse it, light it and honour it.⁽¹⁾

Every year the Nubians were to pay to the leader of the Muslims 360 head of slaves; and should return to the land of Islam any slaves that might seek refuge in Nubia.⁽²⁾

The Muslims, on their side, pledged peace and security towards the Nubians as long as they abided by the terms of that treaty.⁽³⁾

The treaty was reported to have been written by Shurḥabīl in the month of Ramaḍān A.H.31/May-June 652.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Al-Maqrīzī, vol.I, pp.199-202; Shuqayr, vol.I, p.44; MacMichael, vol.I, p.158; Yūsuf Faḍl is doubtful about the establishment of a mosque by the Muslims at Christian Dongola at that early date (The Arabs, pp.24-5).
 2. Al-Maqrīzī, op. cit., Shuqayr, op. cit., MacMichael, op. cit.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

When carrying out the treaty, the Nubians were said to have paid an extra 40 heads of slaves as a gift to the governor of Egypt.⁽¹⁾ In response, the Muslims provided Nubia with a large gift of wheat, barley, lentils, oil, clothes and horses.⁽²⁾

In reference to these mutual gifts MacMichael says: "the gift of one party was, in theory, no doubt the equivalent of that of the other".⁽³⁾

The baqt treaty proved to have been of great importance and significance to the development of relations between Egypt and Nūbia. In fact it was considered as the basis of good neighbourly relations between Egypt and Nūbia for a period that extended almost for six centuries.⁽⁴⁾

It was emphasized that the good relations that prevailed between Egypt and Nubia, during the Tūlūnid, Ikhshīdid and Fāṭimid periods were due almost entirely to the regular delivery of the baqt and the need of these regimes for large numbers of black slaves,⁽⁵⁾ mainly to fill the ranks of the Egyptian army.⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Maqrīzī, op. cit.,

2. MacMichael, vol.I, p.158.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., Hillelson, JRAS, p.657; The Arabs, p.124.

5. The Arabs, p.91.

6. Ibid., p.124.

On the other hand, it was observed that the unfriendly relations of the Fatimids, the Ayyubids and the Mamlūks towards the Arabs who seem to have been forced to push south in Upper Egypt and beyond, and the policies of these regimes towards Nūbia, led to the erosion of the strength of the latter.⁽¹⁾

The baqt treaty could not stop the Arab migratory movement - especially across Nubia to the region beyond. Throughout these centuries there was a steady, slow migratory movement of the Arab nomads from Egypt into Nūbia and across it into the rich fertile plains of 'Alwa.⁽²⁾

Under the Mamlūks, Egypt seems to have adopted a policy of creating a vassal state on its southern frontier.⁽³⁾ The Arab migratory movement which started as one of gradual infiltration seems to have gained momentum by the middle of the 8th/14th century.⁽⁴⁾

As a result of the Mamlūks' offensive policy which was exemplified in repeated punitive attacks on Nubia⁽⁵⁾ and due to settlement of considerable numbers of Arabs accompanying the armies⁽⁶⁾, and most significant by virtue of intermarriage

1. The Arabs, p.90.

2. Ibid., p.128.

3. Ibid., p.90.

4. Hillelson, JRAS, p.656.

5. The Arabs, p.125.

6. Ibid.

between the Arabs and the royal families of Nūbia and exploiting the matrilineal system of succession of Nūbia,⁽¹⁾ the Arabs eventually succeeded in imposing their supremacy over al-Muqarra, by seizing the Nūbian throne.⁽²⁾

For the first time, and by virtue of that system of succession, a Muslim - Sayf al-Dīn 'Abdallāh Barshambū, a nephew

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1. "It is said that when a king [Nubian] dies and leaves a son and a nephew (the son of his sister) that the latter reigns after his uncle instead of the son; but if there is no sister's son, then the king's own son succeeds.

The Arabs accepted and used for their purposes, this system of succession among the Nubians". (MacMichael, vol.I, p.178). See also Ibn Khaldūn's confirmation in the next footnote.

2. The Arabs, p.125. In reference to the Nubian matrilineal system of succession Ibn Khaldun says: "The kings of Nubia, at first, tried to drive them [i.e. the Arabs] out by force. They failed, so they changed their tactics and tried to win them over by offering their daughters in marriage. Thus it was that their kingdom disintegrated for it passed to the sons of [the Arab tribe of] Juhayna from their Nubian mothers in accordance with the non-Arab practice of inheritance by the sister and her sons". (Ibn Khaldūn, al-'Ibar, vol.V, pp.922-3).

of King Dāwud, was raised by the Mamlūk's help, to the Nūbian throne, and Dongola itself fell to the Muslims in 717/1317.⁽¹⁾

Thus, the Islamization of the kingly office seems to have marked the end of the Christian kingdom - for in Nubia, the king was believed to have been the only person capable of inspiring his subjects and offering resistance to foreign invasion.⁽²⁾

To commemorate his ascendancy to the Nūbian throne and to mark the supremacy of Islam in his territory, the King was reported to have converted into a mosque the two-storey church of the capital.⁽³⁾

The fall of Dongola to the Muslims seems to have removed the barriers and led to the mass immigration of Arab tribes then.⁽⁴⁾

Thus, in effect, the Dongola region seems to have been dominated by the Arabs and converted into Islam. Not only that but Dongola then was said to have been regarded as a protectorate or dependancy of Egypt and the khutba was read in the name of the caliph of the age and the ruler of Egypt.⁽⁵⁾

1. The Arabs, p.125.

2. Ibid., p.120.

3. Ibid.

4. Hillelson, op. cit., pp.658-9.

5. Ibid.

Nevertheless, following the collapse of the Christian kingdom of Dongola, Egypt, under the Mamluks, for one reason or other, was said to have lost interest in Nubia.⁽¹⁾ Hence, there resulted a complete gap,⁽²⁾ or a 'dark age' in the history of the Sudan - in the Egyptian records, the only source - for a period that extended for about one hundred and fifty years,⁽³⁾ or even two hundred.⁽⁴⁾

Meanwhile, the process of the steady flow of immigration of Arab tribes seems to have been on the increase and to have drifted south into the kingdom of 'Alawa during that period. Such a process of the Arab penetration into 'Alawa was assumed to have resembled that of their forerunners in al-Marīṣ and al-Muqarra - in the settled regions they intermarried with the families of the local chieftains and the indigenous inhabitants and by virtue of matrilineal succession they gained control of the people and the region.⁽⁵⁾

By the end of the 9th/15th century both the kingdom of 'Alawa and its church were said to have become too weak to check the pressure of the Arab tribes who eventually overran it, under

1. Hillelson, op. cit., p.659.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. The Arabs, p.128.

5. Ibid.

the leadership of the Qawasima chief - 'Abdallāh Jammā', and became the rulers of 'Alawa.'⁽¹⁾

By the beginning of the 10th/16th century, however, the Arabs had to contend and clash with a formidable rival - the Funj who were said to have been recent immigrants pushing northwards, down the Blue Nile.⁽²⁾

As a result the Funj, under 'Umāra Dūnqus, emerged as kings and the 'Abdallāb (descendants of 'Abdallāh Jammā') reduced to viceroys.⁽³⁾

Thus in 910/1504 the Funj and the Abdallāb were reported to have founded the first Muslim state - Funj kingdom⁽⁴⁾ - with the king's seat at Sennar and his viceroy's headquarters first at Qarri, then at al-Ḥalfaya, near the junction of the two Niles.⁽⁵⁾

From the above brief survey it has been illustrated that it took nine centuries of slow process of Arabization and Isma^Llization to convert the Sudan into a semi-culturally Arabized Muslim state

1. The Arabs, p.132.

2. Ibid., p.133.

3. Ibid., p.134.

4. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.40.

5. Hillelson, op. cit., p.661.

by the beginning of the 10th/16th century.

During this long period there seems to have been no evidence of any serious attempt from the Muslim rulers - in particular those of Egypt - to annex the Sudan to Dār al-Islam or even to have been seriously concerned about the affairs of their fellow Muslim Arabs.

Not only that, but even after the fall of Dongola to the Muslims in the 8th/14th century and when the khutba was read in the name of the Muslim Caliph and the ruler of Egypt⁽¹⁾, the rulers of Egypt seem to have totally ignored what was taking place in the Sudan - and for about two hundred years.⁽²⁾

Instead of consolidating the state of Islam and backing their missionary efforts by sending batches of 'ulamā' and establishing institutions of learning in the new acquired Muslim territories, they seem to have left the Muslim Arab nomads on their own. Thus, the first generations of Muslims seem to have been denied the opportunity or even their entitlement to build up a genuine Islamic heritage and to spread genuine Islamic teachings.

At any rate, the nine centuries-long pre-Funj period, in effect, came to be characterized by lack of concern from the

1. See above.

2. The Arabs, p.128.

Muslim rulers of Egypt as far as the dissemination of Islamic teachings were in question. Internally there was not, then, a Muslim state or a Muslim ruler to look after the affairs of the Muslims and to create conditions conducive to the spread of learning.

Hence, the acute scarcity of 'ulamā' who would have shouldered the task of spreading genuine Islamic teaching to the Sudanese Muslims, then.

As evidence of the scarcity of Muslim learning and teachers during the nine centuries of pre-Funj era, only very few and vague references seem to have been made to the arrival of teachers in the Sudan, as could be seen from the brief survey below.

The first-ever teachers claimed to have arrived in the Sudan were said to have been an official mission of 'ulamā' from Baghdad, sent by the 'Abbāsīd caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, in response to a request from a delegation said to have come from "Barr al-Sudan" for this purpose.⁽¹⁾

The khalifa was reported to have responded positively and sent with the Sudanese delegation to Dongola (the capital of Christian Nūbia then) a mission of seven 'ulamā' from the children of al-'Abbās, to teach the Muslims there the tenets of Islam.⁽²⁾

1. Kātib al-Shūna, p.124.

2. Ibid.

The mission was said to have settled at Dongola and left behind a generation of descendants.⁽¹⁾

No more information was given about the Sudanese delegation or the Baghdadi mission of 'ulamā'.

However, the fact that the report on the alleged mission was written by a Sudanese, based on local traditions and after an elapse of about ten centuries after the incident was claimed to have happened, casts a great doubt on its credibility.⁽²⁾

The second reference to the arrival of Muslim teachers during the pre-Funj era was the one made to another official mission of 'ulamā' reported to have been headed by 'Abdallāh b. Ahmad b. Sulaym al-Aswānī, a Fatimid propagandist, who was sent by the Fatimid general, Jawhar, to King George of Nubia.⁽³⁾

The purpose of the mission was said to have been twofold: first, to demand the resumption of the baqt⁽⁴⁾, which seems to have been withheld for some time; and second, to call the King of Nūbia to embrace Islam.⁽⁵⁾

1. Kātib al-Shūna, p.124.

2. The reference is to Kātib al-Shūna, writing about 1838 (Holt and Daly, p.26).

3. The Arabs, p.91.

4. For the baqt, see above, p.20, n.3 .

5. The Arabs, p.91, quoting al-Maqrīzī, al-Muqaffa, IV, f.227B/228A.

The first demand was said to have been positively responded to,⁽¹⁾ but the second demand was not only rejected but the Fāṭimid general himself was called upon to embrace Christianity.⁽²⁾

However, the report gives an indication of the size of the Muslim population (adult men) and the tolerant attitude of the king towards these Muslims, when Abū Sulaym and sixty other Muslims were said to have been allowed to celebrate the occasion of ‘īd al-adha (feast of sacrifice) freely, in the capital Dongola.⁽³⁾

Although the report on the arrival of this mission in the Sudan seems to have been genuine, yet as far as the teaching aspect was concerned, it appears to have served little or no purpose at all.

Nevertheless, the responsibility of dissemination of Islamic teachings in the Sudan at that time was not shouldered by official missions, but was carried out by the voluntary efforts of individual teachers dedicated to the cause of Islam.

The earliest teacher on record to have settled in the Sudan was said to have been a Yemenī Arab, called Ghulamallāh b. ‘Ā’id.⁽⁴⁾

1. Holt and Daly, p.19.

2. The Arabs, p.92.

3. Ibid.

4. Holt, p.28.

He was said to have been a Sharīfī (noble descent) whose ancestry could be traced back to Mūsā al-Kāzim and, ultimately, to al-Husayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Tālib.⁽¹⁾

As a young man Ghulāmallāh grew up at al-Haliya [al-Hilayla] village in Yemen, on an island called Nawāwa.⁽²⁾ Then, following the footsteps of his father he was said to have moved to one of the islands of the Red Sea called Sāqiya, settled for a while with his family and begot his two sons Rikāb and Ribāt.⁽³⁾

Finally he was reported to have migrated to Dongola about the middle of the 8th/14th century.⁽⁴⁾ Dongola, on his arrival, was said to have been utterly sunk in perplexity and confusion, owing to the absence of learned men.⁽⁵⁾

Hence, Ghulāmallāh settled there and was said to have built up mosques and taught the Qur'ān and religious sciences, direct to his children, disciples and the sons of the Muslims,⁽⁶⁾ with the result that all the men of rank were said to have been among his pupils, either directly or through his descendants, the sons

1. The Arabs, p.178.

2. MacMichael, vol.II, p.33.

3. Ibid., p.35.

4. Ibid., p.10.

5. Ibid., p.342.

6. Ibid., p.35.

(1)
of Jābir, who were the fifth generation after him. (2)

In addition to the above, Ghulamallāh b. 'Ā'id was regarded as a Ṣūfī Shaykh. In evidence of this, a qubba was said to have been erected over his tomb at Dongola. (3) Not only that but in confirmation of his Ṣūfī status one of his descendants - al-Shaykh Muḥammad Qaylī - who was also regarded as a Ṣūfī Shaykh, was quoted in al-Tabaqat to have said that "most of the (Ṣūfī) Shaykhs of rank such as awtād, ahbār, budalā' and nujabā', were direct descendants of my grand-father Ghulamallāh". (4)

The Ṣūfī status of his sons was also referred to in a study on Sufism in the Sudan. (5)

However, in view of that sad situation of the Muslims of Dongola, at the time, Ghulamallāh seems to have been more pre-occupied with the dissemination and consolidation of Islamic teachings - the Qur'ān and religious sciences and practices - than with the propagation of his Ṣūfī rituals.

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1. Holt, P.M., "The Sons of Jābir and their Kins: A Clan of Sudanese Notables", BSOAS, vol.XXX, 1967, p.146.
 2. Ibid.; see also, "The khalwa of the Sons of Jabir", below.
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.357
 4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.351, awtād, ahbar, budalā' and nujabā', these were ranks of the Ṣūfī saints.
 5. Qarībullāh, pp.60, 61.

The second teacher to arrive in the Sudan was said to have been Ḥamad Abū Dunāna, who was said to have settled at Saqadī al-Gharb, in the district of Berber about A.D.1445.⁽¹⁾

Ḥamad Abū Dunāna, like Ghulamallāh b. 'Ā'id, was said to have been of Sharīfī origin, and was a son-in-law of 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī (d.869-75/1466-70), who was the initiator of the Shādhiliyya Ṣūfī Order in al-Maghrib.⁽²⁾

Hence Ḥamad was considered, primarily, a Ṣūfī missionary who had come to the Sudan to propagate the Shādhiliyya Order in the country, and hence it was believed to have been the first Ṣūfī Order to be introduced in the Sudan.⁽³⁾ Accordingly, he must have been familiar with the Ṣūfī khalwa and its practices.⁽⁴⁾

However, he was reported to have established a mosque at Saqadī where he taught the Qur'ān to the Muslims there.⁽⁵⁾

On the other hand, although Abū Dunāna's Ṣūfī mission does

1. Holt, p.28; The Arabs, p.178.

2. The Arabs, p.178.

3. Ibid.

4. See chapter II.

5. 'Abdallāh al-Bashīr, "al-Tarbiya fi al-masjid wa al-kuttab
(al-khalwa)", a paper (11 pp), Khartoum, March, 1980, p.2.

not seem to have met with much success at that early period of the history of Ṣūfism in the Sudan, yet he seems to have succeeded in establishing, by way of marriage, strong social relations. Four of his daughters were said to have been given in marriage to prominent Sudanese at the time, and have become mothers of great men.⁽¹⁾

Similarly al-Bandārī from al-Shām (Syria) and Ḥamad b. Zarrūq from Ḥadramawt⁽²⁾, the two learned men who were reported to have taught al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb (b. 913/1507) at the maktab, were known for their Ṣūfī practices.⁽³⁾

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1. MacMichael, vol.II, pp.82, 86 and 195. One of the daughters of Abū Dunāna was said to have been married to 'Abdallāh Jammā', the 'Abdallābī Arab leader and viceroy of the Funj Sultan 'Umāra Donqas - and was said to have been the mother of al-Shaykh 'Ajīb, al-Manjeluk, who succeeded his father in his posts. Another of his daughters was said to have been the mother of the great Ṣūfī saint al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb. A third daughter was said to have been the mother of al-Shaykh Ḥāmid Abū 'Asā, and a fourth daughter was said to have been married to the ancestor of al-Sūwārāb family.
 2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.124.
 3. Ibid., pp.51, 150-1.

There are vague references to a group of religious men who seem to have flourished during the 'dark ages',⁽¹⁾ of the pre-Funj era, on the eastern bank of the Nile, near al-Ṣabābī.⁽²⁾ They were widely known as the "Sons of 'Awnallāh", whose origin has not been firmly established.

According to al-Ṭabaqāt, the 'Sons of 'Awnallāh' were two men of religion and piety - known as al-Ḍarīr and al-Laqrī.⁽³⁾ Al-Ḍarīr was said to have served as a judge under al-'Anaj.⁽⁴⁾

These two religious men were reported to have been so popular, that all the people of the region that extended from al-Ṣabābī to Shambāt and al-Ḥalfāya used to line behind them in prayer and for their baraka.⁽⁵⁾

Kātib al-Shūna, however, refers to the 'sons of 'Awnallāh' as being seven men (not two), who lived during the time of al-'Anaj and that one of them - called al-Ḍarīr - was employed as

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1. Reference to the 150-200 years after the fall of Dongola to the Arabs (The Arabs, p.128).
 2. MacMichael, vol.II, p.33.
 3. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.73.
 4. Indigenous inhabitants of 'Alawa before the establishment of the Funj kingdom.
 5. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.73.

a judge by al-‘Anaj and that their graves remained visible near the village of Abū Ḥalīma.⁽¹⁾

In recognition of the holiness and high religious status of these men, al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb (A.H.913-1059), who had not witnessed their time, was said to have been in the habit of visiting their graves and urging the people to do likewise.⁽²⁾

However, there are strong indications from al-Ṭabaqāt itself, and also from traditions reported by MacMichael⁽³⁾, to suggest that the widely known 'sons of 'Anwallāh' could have been the descendants or 'sons' of Ghulāmallāh b. 'Ā'id, mentioned above, and in particular of his son Rikāb.⁽⁴⁾

Rikāb b. Ghulāmallāh was said to have had five sons: 'Abdallāh and 'Abd al-Nabī (from one wife) and Zayd al-Ḍarīr, Ḥabīb and 'Ajīb (from another wife).⁽⁵⁾

The three mentioned last brothers seemed to have migrated to, and settled on, the eastern bank of the Blue Nile in central Sudan. This is evidenced by the reported tradition that says that 'Ajīb was the ancestor of al-Sidrāb, the inhabitants of the

1. Kātib al-Shūna, op. cit., p.124; see also al-Ṭabaqāt, p.73, n.9.

2. Ibid.

3. MacMichael, vol.II, p.33.

4. Al-Ṭabaqāt, pp.216-7.

5. Ibid., p.217.

village of Abū Ḥalīma,⁽¹⁾ Ḥabīb - his brother - was said to have been the ancestor of the nearby village of al-Ṣabābī⁽²⁾. In addition, their nephew Dahmash b. Salīm b. Ribāt b. Ghulāmallāh was reported to have been the ancestor of the people of another village in the vicinity - the village of Abyaḍ Dīrī.⁽³⁾

Being the descendants of the learned and pious man - Ghulāmallāh - these migrants would naturally be assumed to have transferred to their new settlement region, the Islamic teachings and practices they had inherited from their great ancestor.

Now, a closer look into the reports on the 'sons of 'Awnallāh' and the migrant descendants or 'sons of Ghulāmallāh' as alluded to above seems to reveal the greater similarity between the two groups.

Both groups seem to have consisted of men of religion and piety and influence over the inhabitants of the region. Both groups were living at the region of Abū Ḥalīma. Further, they seem to have been living at the same time. Zayd al-Darīr and his migrant brothers were the second generation after their grandfather Ghulāmallāh who lived in the middle of the 8th/14th century.⁽⁴⁾ Hence his grandsons would have lived and died in

1. MacMichael, op. cit., p.33.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.216.

4. See above.

the next century - the 9th/15th, and before the time of al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb (b.913/1507).⁽¹⁾

Moreover, each of the two groups had a member bearing the name of al-Darīr.

From all the above, it could be concluded that the so-called 'sons of 'Awnallāh' were no other than the 'sons of Ghulāmallāh'.

What seems of relevance to this study is to demonstrate that the religious message started by the celebrated teacher Ghulāmallāh in the Dongola region (the dissemination of the Islamic teachings) seems to have been carried on by his descendants, not only in the Dongola and Shayqiyya region - as did later his famous descendants, the sons of Jābir, during the Funj era⁽²⁾ - but even before them, in the 9th/15th century and in the Christian kingdom of 'Alawa, by his descendants the 'sons of Ghulāmallāh - wrongly known as the 'sons of 'Awnallāh'.

From the foregoing it seems clear that during the pre-Funj period there were very few genuine teachers engaged in the dissemination of Islamic teachings. Except for Ghulāmallāh b. 'Ā'id and, to some extent, Abu Dunāna, there seems to have been no indication of any substantial

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.73, n.9.

2. See below.

contribution in this respect to the spread of Islamic teaching by the few persons mentioned above.

Not only that, but despite the strenuous mission of the dedicated and pious 'ālim Ghulāmāllāh, in view of the pervasive ignorance of the Muslims of the time of the tenets of Islam on the one hand, and the lack of learned men on the other, the state of the superficiality of Islam amongst these people as described above, seems to have persisted up to the time of the establishment of the first Muslim state - the Funj kingdom, early in the 10th/16th century.

However, in view of the scarcity of 'ulamā' or Muslim teachers, as indicated above, and taking into consideration their vital role in respect of the spread of genuine Islamic teachings, it could be assumed that no genuine Islamization could have been achieved without their active participation.

Such a situation seems to have been clearly demonstrated by the state of Islam in the Sudan in the pre-Funj era.

For historical reasons, it took nine centuries of a slow process of Arabization and Islamization before the first Sudanese Muslim state - the Funj - could emerge, as was alluded

to above.⁽¹⁾

It seems to have been emphasized that because of the almost complete absence of the 'ulamā teachers from the scene, the state of Islam amongst the Sudanese throughout these centuries was said to have been superficial. The task of disseminating the Islamic faith during these centuries was reported to have been carried out, in the main, by the immigrant Arab tribes and in particular by two groups of people - neither of whom was versed in the Islamic teachings, nor entirely disposed to its cause: the Muslim traders who were more concerned with their commercial activities, and the Arab nomads (or 'urbān) who were generally illiterate and consequently their knowledge of Islam was imperfect⁽²⁾ - and hence the superficiality of Islam amongst the early generations of Muslims in the Sudan.

To confirm such a state of affairs, and in reference to the situation after the fall of the Christian kingdom of Nubia in the early 8th/14th century, it was said that the Dongola and northern tribes knew no more of Islam than the shahāda (declaration of Islam) until, in the 8th/14th century, Ghulāmallāh b. 'Ā'id founded a seat of learning in Dongola,⁽³⁾ which he

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1. The baqt treaty between the Muslims and the Nubians was said to have been concluded in 31/652 (al-Maqrizī, vol.I, p.202) and the establishment of the Funj kingdom was in 910/1504 (al-Tabaqāt, p.40).
 2. The Arabs, p.177.
 3. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.100.

found "sunk in extreme perplexity and error for lack of learned men".⁽¹⁾

Describing the same situation, MacMichael states that "up to the latter part of the 14th century such 'Muhammadanism' that existed among the people of Dongola was purely nominal, until there arrived in their midst the learned and pious Shaykh, Ghulāmāllāh b. 'Ā'id...".⁽²⁾

The effect of al-Shaykh Ghulāmāllāh and his mosque-schools, however, does not seem to have had any impact in the region up the Nile, beyond Dongola.

What seems to have been emphasized from the above, was the acute need for teachers and 'ulamā' and above all for favourable conditions to carry out their sacred mission.

Moreover, what could be realised about the few teachers who managed to come and settle in the Sudan during the pre-Funj period was that all of them were said to have been Ṣūfīs.

It should be added that, not only the emigrant teachers who were said to have been Ṣūfīs, but their descendants, too, seem to

1. MacMichael, vol.II, p.13.

2. Ibid.

have followed their footsteps.⁽¹⁾

All this seems to have been a clear indication of the pervasive dominance of Sūfism in the Muslim lands, on which the Muslim Sudan would rely, almost entirely, for the supply of the badly needed 'ulamā' and teachers, as would be illustrated below under the Funj kingdom.

1. See the "Sons of Ghulāmallāh or 'Awnallāh" above; see al-Tabaqāt, p.73. The four sons of al-Shaykh Ḥamad b. Zarrūq were reported to have been Sūfī saints, possessors of baraka (blessings) and makers of karāmāt (miracles) (al-Tabaqāt, p.150).

CHAPTER TWO

THE RISE OF THE SŪFĪS IN THE SUDAN

With the establishment of the Funj kingdom of Sennar in the Sudan early in the 10th/16th century, conditions seem to have favoured the arrival and work of Muslim teachers and holy-men.⁽¹⁾ This took the form of a constant inflow of individual teachers who seem to have come from all parts of the older lands of Islam and to have brought to the Sudanese some knowledge of the precepts of the Holy Law and to have instilled into them the practices of piety common to the Muslim world.⁽²⁾

The prevalent practices of piety, as referred to above, and which seem to have influenced the Sudanese to a great extent were the rituals of the Sūfi Orders - and in particular the khalwa practices, as will be explained below.

Hitherto, references to the khalwa seem to have been indirect. However, with the return to his country of the first Sudanese ‘ālim - al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī - on completion of his study in Egypt in 925/1520,⁽³⁾ the khalwa idea and

1. Holt, p.29.

2. Ibid., p.28.

3. Qarībullāh, [Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Fatih, "al-Taṣawwuf fī al-Sūdān ilā Nihāyat ‘Asr al-Fūnj", unpublished M.A. thesis (University of Khartoum, 1384/1965)] p.74. However, he seems to have returned to the Sudan after 935/1528 (see p.49, n.1, below).

practices seem to have started to take root in the Funj kingdom.

Al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī, it is worth noting, was not only the first Sudanese to have studied at al-Azhar, nor the first Sudanese ‘ālim to have flourished under the Funj kingdom, but, more important, and relevant to the issue under consideration, he was the first Sudanese to have been initiated in the Ṣūfī Path and, indeed, to have been the first one to introduce a Ṣūfī Order - al-Bakrīyya, which was a branch of the Khalwatīyya Order⁽¹⁾, in the Sudan.⁽²⁾

The Khalwatīyya Order was said to have been founded by Abū Muḥammad al-Khalwatī, who used to have been constantly attached to the khalwa and to have ordered his followers to do likewise.⁽³⁾ In addition, the Khalwatīyya Order was reported to have been claimed as embracing the essence of all the other Orders.⁽⁴⁾ What is of more relevance here was the fact that, as its name indicates, that Order was distinctly characterized by strong attachment of its members to the khalwa.⁽⁵⁾

According to al-Ṭabaqāt, al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī was

1. Qarībullāh, op. cit., p.64.

2. Ibid., p.65.

3. Ibid., p.68.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

initiated in the Bakrīyya tariqa by al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Bakrī,⁽¹⁾ while on pilgrimage to Mecca,⁽²⁾ though he had been introduced into the Sūfī Path at al-Azhar by his two teachers, the brothers al-Laqqānī - Shams al-Dīn and Nāṣir al-Dīn.⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī, in turn, was reported to have introduced into the Sūfī Path his son and successor, Muḥammad,⁽⁴⁾ who was also reinitiated in the Bakrīyya tariqa by al-Shaykh

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1. Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Bakrī was Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Abū al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī who came to be known as al-Bakrī the great; one of his works was his commentary on Mukhtaṣar Abī Shujā‘. He was born and died in Egypt also in 994/1578 (al-Tabaqāt, n.13, p.113 quoting al-Zarkalī, al-‘Alam, VII, p.289).
 2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.113
 3. The brothers al-Laqqānī were:
 - a) Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, born at Laqqān village in Egypt in 875/1470 and died 935/1528. At al-Azhar he was the one in charge of teaching Khalīl and giving fatwā. (Al-Tabaqāt, n.14, p.113).
 - b) Nāṣir al-Dīn was the elder brother, born 873/1468 and died 958/1551. He succeeded his brother in giving fatwā (ibid.) Amongst the subjects taught by the Laqqānī were fiqh and Sūfism. (Qarībullah, op. cit., pp.83-84.)
 4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.113.

Muhammad al-Bakrī.⁽¹⁾

However, owing to the sad state of ignorance even of the elements of Sharī'a under which his people on the White Nile were living, and which was exemplified by the anti-Islamic practices such as "a man would divorce his wife and she could be remarried, to another one, the same day or the next, without observation of al-'idda"⁽²⁾ al-Shaykh Mahmūd was said to have been more preoccupied with the teaching of fiqh than with the consolidation of his new tariqa.⁽³⁾ Consequently, he was reported to have established seventeen schools between Alays (al-Kawwa) and Khartoum.⁽⁴⁾

According to al-Shaykh Khūjalī, these schools, or khalwas as they came to be called, continued to function until they were destroyed by the Shilluk's tribal raids and the

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.113.

2. Al-'idda refers to the Sharī'a probational period which a divorced woman should wait before being remarried to another man - three menstruation periods (Qarībullah, op. cit., p.63).

3. Ibid.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.345.

unforgettable year of famine, Umm laham⁽¹⁾ of 1095/1684.⁽²⁾

In other words, the khalwas established by al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-ʿArakī seem to have lasted for more than one hundred and fifty years.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-ʿArakī, as the pioneer initiator of al-Bakriyya tarīqa, seems to have greatly emphasized the idea and practice of the khalwa as a place for the performance of Sūfī rituals in the Sudan.

His task of initiation in the tarīqa was carried over, through a system of dynastic succession, first by his son Muḥammad, then by his great-grandson - Barr b. ʿAbd al-Maʿbūd - who was handed down the trust by his maternal grandfather, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-ʿArakī.⁽⁴⁾

The next, and more direct, reference to the khalwa as an

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.345.

2. Ibid., p.210.

3. Between the return of al-Shaykh Maḥmūd to the Sudan which seems to have taken place after 935/1528 (see p.12, n.2 and p.14, n.1 above) and the destruction of these khalwas by 1095/1684 (al-Tabaqāt, p.210).

4. According to Trimingham they were khalwas (Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.100). Al-Tabaqāt, p.113.

institution for Ṣūfī rituals was mentioned in al-Ṭabaqāt in connection with al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir who flourished at Turnaq, in the Shayqiyya land, more than a generation after the return of Shaykh Mahmūd al-‘Arakī, to the Sudan.⁽¹⁾

Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir was the first successor of the famous school of the sons of Jābir, established by his elder brother Ibrāhīm al-Būlād.⁽²⁾ Although Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān was more known as a teacher of fiqh, yet he also acquired a high reputation for his piety and Ṣūfī activities. For example, he was reported to have written a handbook on Ṣūfism called Tarshīd al-Murīd fi ‘Ilm al-Taṣawwuf,⁽³⁾ taught Ṣūfism as a subject of study, and even granted ijāzāt (certificates) to his students to teach ‘ilm and Ṣūfism;⁽⁴⁾ and, as a result, forty of his graduates were reported to have reached the stage of qutb in ‘ilm and piety.⁽⁵⁾

1. MacMichael, vol.II, p. 10.

— The eldest brother, al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Būlād was reported to have returned to the Sudan between 960/1554 and 968/1562 (see MacMichael, vol.II, p.10, n.6). Hence al-Shaykh Mahmūd al-‘Arakī seems to have returned to the Sudan between 935/1528 and 938/1531, i.e., after the death of his teacher Shams al-Dīn al-Laqqānī (see p.12, n.2 above).

2. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.252.

3. Ibid., p.252.

4. Ibid., p.105.

5. Ibid., p.252.

What is of direct relevance to us at this stage was that al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān used to practice seclusion at a khalwa he had established besides the family's mosque of study. According to al-Tabaqāt while Dafa'allāh b. Muqbil was anxiously waiting for his son 'Abdallāh - who was, then, a student under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir - to recite his fiqh lesson in order to assess his progress, al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān ordered his student to recite the lesson while excusing himself that he was busy, "he entered his khalwa and closed it upon himself."⁽¹⁾ And because of the baraka of the Shaykh the student gave an exceptionally excellent recitation that amazed the audience and pleased his father.⁽²⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān was said to have acquired his Sūfī experiences, and in particular the khalwa practices, from Egypt,⁽³⁾ while he was studying at al-Azhar under al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Banūfarī.⁽⁴⁾

Al-Banūfarī, it should be stated, was a student of al-Shaykh

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.253.

2. Ibid.

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.100.

4. Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Banūfarī was one of the prominent fuqahā' of Egypt and was known for his piety and asceticism. He studied under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Ajhūri who was in turn a student of Nāṣir al-Dīn and Shams al-Dīn, the two Laqqānīs. He finally chaired the Malīkite madhhab in Egypt and died about 998/1590; al-Tabaqāt, p.345, n.1; Qarībullāh, op. cit., p.44, n.1.

'Abd al-Rahmān al-Ajhūri who, in turn, was - like al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-'Arakī - a student of the brothers Laqqānī: Shams al-Dīn and Nāsir al-Dīn.⁽¹⁾

Hence, both al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jabir and al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-'Arakī before him, seem to have obtained their academic and Sūfī experiences from the same source.

Hitherto, Sūfism and Sūfī practices seem to have been restricted to individual 'ulama' such as Ghulamallāh b. 'Ā'id,⁽²⁾ Abū Dunāna,⁽³⁾ al-Bandārī,⁽⁴⁾ Ḥamad b. Zarrūq⁽⁵⁾ and 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir. Al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-'Arakī, too, though he was a head of a tarīqa, yet, because of his preoccupation with the more pressing problem of dissemination of fiqh, had to restrict his Sūfī activities to a narrow level.

However, the arrival of active representatives of the Sūfī Orders into the Funj kingdom, in the second half of the 10th/16th century,⁽⁶⁾ seems to have given the greatest impetus to the spread of the idea and practices of the khalwa.

1. See p.15, n.4 above.

2. See chapter III, "Teachers" below.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Al-Tabaqāt, p.40.



Reference is made here to al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Maghribī who was said to have initiated al-Shaykh Idrīs b. Muḥammad al-Arbāb;⁽¹⁾ al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Miṣrī⁽²⁾ and al-Tilmisānī al-Maghribī⁽³⁾ - who both were reported to have initiated al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsa, Suwār al-Dhahab,⁽⁴⁾ and above all, to al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī.⁽⁵⁾ Al-Bahārī was said to have been the khalīfa of al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī and propagator of his Sūfī Order - the Qādirīyya - which was centred in Baghdad.⁽⁶⁾

Al-Bahārī was said to have come to the Sudan on the invitation of Dāwūd b. 'Abd al-Jalīl, a Sudanese pilgrim, who had met him in Mecca.⁽⁷⁾ He was said to have introduced the Qādirīyya Sūfī Order into the Funj land.⁽⁸⁾

Although the other representatives of the Sūfī Orders mentioned above - al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, al-Tilmisānī

1. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.42 and pp.50-66.

2. Ibid., p.43.

3. Ibid., p.42.

4. Ibid., and pp.348-9.

5. Ibid., p.42 and pp.128-130.

6. Holt and Daly, p.34.

7. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.128.

8. Ibid., p.142.

and 'Abd al-Kāfī - were also said to have been propagators of the Sūfī Path, yet it was al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī who seems to have evoked the greatest interest among the Sudanese in the Sūfī Orders.⁽¹⁾

However, his selection of recruits and his unorthodox method of initiation and his choice of his khalīfa were issues of controversy: unlike the other propagators of the ṭarīqa al-Bahārī seems to have addressed his call, primarily, to the non-'ulamā'. In addition, he seems to have chosen his first recruits from among the tribal leaders and representatives of prominent families.⁽²⁾ Moreover, the method he employed to select his recruits to join his ṭarīqa seems to have been

1. See p.60 and n.2, below.

2. Of his disciples were al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Sādiq (al-Hamīm) of the Rikābiyya tribe; al-Shaykh Bān al-Naqā al-Ḍarīr of the Fādīlāb tribe; al-Shaykh 'Ajīb the Great, leader of the 'Abdallāh tribe, successor of the co-founder of the Funj State - 'Abdallāh Jammā', Hijāzī b. Mu'īn who had planned the town of Arbajī and its mosque 30 years before Sennar; Shā' al-Dīn b. al-Tuwaym, the Shukriyya tribal leader; Rahma, the ancestor of the Ḥalāwīn tribe; Ḥamad al-Nijayyid of the Jammū'iyya tribe and others. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.129, see also Qarībullah, op. cit., pp.122-129.

excessively cruel.

According to al-Tabaqāt, al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī was said to have gathered the people at the house of al-Sharīf Muḥammad al-Hindī and explained to them how they would be selected for his tarīqa. In order to test their sincerity and absolute submission to the tarīqa Shaykh, it seems, he had hidden a number of rams into al-qatī' (the inner store room); and addressing those intended to join the Path said: "I will initiate, guide and slaughter - and thus you will die in faith."⁽¹⁾ Hence, the people dispersed except al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Sādiq (al-Hamīm), who was, then, a youth.⁽²⁾ Al-Bahārī entered him into al-qatī', initiated him into the Path and slew one of the rams, and its blood ran outside al-qatī' (the inner room).⁽³⁾

Next, al-Shaykh Bān al-Naqā al-Darīr, who was, then, an old man, volunteered to join the tarīqa, and hence he was initiated and another ram was slain - with its blood pouring out to the people.⁽⁴⁾ Then al-Bahārī called for more people to join the Path, but the people (thinking that the two men had been slain) refused his method of initiation.⁽⁵⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.109.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.110.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

However, the two men came out safe (having passed the cruel test) and each one was ordered to eat his ram, in which the secret of the Path was said to have been.⁽¹⁾

Such a trying test seems to have been rejected by some of the 'ulamā' such as al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī who, when ordered by al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī to be initiated in the Sūfī Path, declined the order - declaring that he had read such 'ilm that he would not be preoccupied with anything besides it.⁽²⁾

Further, with a clear disregard to the 'ilm and the 'ulamā', it seems, al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī was reported to have chosen as his khalīfa in the Sudan an almost illiterate man - Muḥammad al-Hamīm,⁽³⁾ who, according to al-Tabaqat had never learnt, of the Qur'ān, beyond sūra of al-zalzala.⁽⁴⁾

Such an appointment seems to have been a snub to the 'ulamā'.

Not only that, but the general conduct of the appointed khalīfa (al-Hamīm) does not seem to have been in accord with

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.110.

2. Ibid., p.235.

3. Ibid., p.317.

4. Qur'ān, sūra 99 (one of the short sūras of the Qur'ān, taught to beginners).

that of the orthodox 'ulama' and men of religion. Hence his actions were strongly opposed by the people - among whom was Dushayn, the qādi of Arbajī⁽¹⁾. The cause of objection was that al-Shaykh al-Hamīm had married, at one time, the two daughters of al-Shaykh Bān al-Naqā, and another pair of sisters - the daughters of Abū Nadawda at Rufā'a and that the number of his wives reached ninety.⁽²⁾

This seems to have provoked al-qādi Dushayn who was reported to have stopped him one day, after the Friday prayer at the mosque of Arbajī, and declared that al-Shaykh al-Hamīm had violated the Book of God and the Sunna of the Prophet by marrying five and six and seven wives (at a time) and by taking the two sisters to wife.⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh al-Hamīm replied that he had been permitted by the Prophet to do so⁽⁴⁾. But al-qādi Dushayn rejected that and pronounced the annulment of all the marriages of al-Shaykh al-Hamīm.⁽⁵⁾

However, although the qādi applied the Sharī'a Law in complete fairness, to the extent that he came to be known

1. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.320.

2. Ibid., p.319.

3. Ibid., p.321.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

afterwards as qādī al-‘adāla (judge of fair justice),⁽¹⁾ yet it was the Ṣūfī Shaykh who seems to have emerged victorious. In retaliation al-Shaykh al-Hamīm was reported to have cursed the qādī praying, "May God split your skin",⁽²⁾ and the qādī was said to have been struck by an illness that caused his skin to come off like that of a serpent.⁽³⁾

Further, the spiritual power of al-Shaykh al-Hamīm seems to have been greatly consolidated by another karāma (miracle) attributed to his two sons ‘Alī and Nūr al-Dīn.⁽⁴⁾ Empowered by their father's baraka (blessings) the two sons were reported to have made four wild elephants, which had scared off their twenty-four camels, obey their orders and take the place of the camels and carry the logs of the dalayb trees to al-Mundara for roofing the mosque and the khalwas of al-Shaykh al-Hamīm.⁽⁵⁾

Thus al-Shaykh al-Hamīm seems to have risen as a great Ṣūfī, a possessor of baraka and maker of karāmāt, and above all, a saint that emerged from the Ṣūfī khalwa and khalīfa of the Qādiriyya Order.

The opposition raised against him for violating the Sharī‘a

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.213-4.

2. Ibid., p.321.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.365.

5. Ibid.

seems to have subsided. Not only that but his actions came to be justified on the ground that he was a representative of a special category of Sūfīs known in Islamic history as the malāmātiyya⁽¹⁾, (those who were to blame).

1. According to al-Ṭabaqāt they were a category of Sūfīs who used to commit acts of "blame" in violation of Shari'a and hence were strongly opposed by the people (al-Ṭabaqāt, p. 319). They were also reported to have been a certain category of Sūfī who had become famous through Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddād and Abū 'Uthmān al-Ḥarīrī. It flourished in Nisapūr and Khurāsān since the middle of the 3rd century (A.H.). Their doctrine was said to have been based on two bases:

a) The supreme self abnegation by concealing whatever abilities and spiritual powers God granted them.

b) Reforming the self by its purification from evil lest the people worshipped them. Hence they were said to have preferred to be seen in forms that appeared to be in contradiction with the Shari'a in order to expose themselves for blame and reprimand of people - and consequently came to be known as the al-malāmātiyya (al-Ṭabaqāt, p.319, n.3. Ḥasan quoting Afīrī, A.A., al Malāmātiyya, pp.9-65 and idem., al-Taṣawwuf, pp.127, 275-280).

Reference in al-Ṭabaqāt to the malāmātiyya category in the Sudan was made to: Makki al-Daqlāshī (pp.333-5) and Isma'il b. Makki al-Daqlāshī (pp.92-97).

As alluded to before, prior to the introduction of the Sūfī Orders in the Sudan, the khalwa practices seem to have been restricted to personal meditation by individual ascetics or Sūfīs (but with no affiliation to any Sūfī Order or active role to initiate or recruit others). The exception of belonging to a Sūfī Order could be the khalwa practices of Shaykh Mahmūd al-‘Arakī, but his tarīqa was inactive and short-lived.

Now with the coming of the active representatives of the Sūfī Orders, the khalwa seems to have become actively associated with these Orders - entering a khalwa was considered a prerequisite for joining the tarīqa - at the hands of the Shaykh for initiation in the Sūfī Path.⁽¹⁾ On the other hand, by the time the Orders entered the Sudan they had already been associated with the saint-cult⁽²⁾, and manifestation of

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1. Cf. Trimingham, The Sūfī Orders in Islam, pp.186-7 for the initiation ceremonies of the Qādiriyya Order which was introduced by al-Bahārī in the Sudan and became the dominant Order.
 2. This saint-cult, according to Trimingham, seems to have come to the Sudan from the Muslim world at that time (Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.126). In confirmation of this view see al-Sha‘rānī's vols. I and II which seems entirely devoted to biographies of saints, saint-cults and saints of the Sūfī Path who flourished in Egypt and elsewhere. It was said to have influenced the author of al-Tabaqāt who was well acquainted with it and hence it also seems to have influenced the attitude of the Sudanese [towards their saints] (Qarībullāh, op. cit., pp.239-240).

baraka (blessings) and karāmāt (miracle making) and kashf (removal of the veil). And the gate to such supernatural spiritual power was Ṣūfī meditation and exercises in a khalwa.

According to Ibn Khaldūn "mystical exertion, retirement (khalwa) and dhikr exercises are as a rule followed by the removal of the veil or kashf of sensual perception and the Ṣūfī beholds divine worlds which a person subject to the senses cannot perceive at all".⁽¹⁾

In the Sudan this phenomenon seems to have been greatly consolidated by Shaykh Taj al-Dīn al-Bahārī who was reported to have said to his disciples in reference to his young chosen khalīfa in the Sudan, "I have come from Baghdad for this boy [Muḥammad al-Hamīm], I have appointed him khalīfa in my place; you should regard him in the same way you have regarded me".⁽²⁾ Then, he was said to have conferred upon al-Hamīm the secret names of the Divine, their attributes and instructed him how to enter the khalwa and perform the rituals and exertion.⁽³⁾ And henceforth the entry of the khalwa by the Shaykh or a recruit of a Ṣūfī Order came to be associated with kashf (unveiling) and manifestation of karāmāt (miracles): al-Tabaqāt floods with references to the karāmāt of the khalwa saints.

1. Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddima, vol.III, p.81.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.129-130.

3. Ibid.

Al-Shaykh al-Hamīm - khalīfa of Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī spent seven years in worship in his khalwa at the village of Dallawat.⁽¹⁾ As a result he became a possessor of baraka and a Ṣūfī saint, as described above.

However, al-Shaykh al-Hamīm does not seem to have been the only Ṣūfī saint in the arena and does not seem to have been recognised by the others as the chief khalīfa, despite his appointment by al-Bahārī to such a post.

Hence, other Ṣūfī Shaykhs were reported to have emerged manifesting karamāt: al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb who was initiated in the Ṣūfī Path by al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Kāfī al-Maghribī,⁽²⁾ and who must have experienced the khalwa rituals, was said to have emerged as a Ṣūfī saint, well known for his karamāt.

Among the reported karamāt of al-Shaykh Idrīs was his prediction of future events. For example, he was said to have foretold Bādī b. Rubāt, leader of the Funj army, about his victory over al-Shaykh ‘Ajīb and that he would be chosen as the king of Sennar.⁽³⁾

He was also reported to have foretold al-Shaykh Muḥammad Abū Idrīs about his future marriage and future children, among

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.323.

2. Ibid., p.42.

3. Ibid., p.65.

whom was to be Dafa'allāh.⁽¹⁾

Al-Shaykh Idrīs came to be known for his victory over the Malikite faqih al-Shaykh 'Alī al-Ajhūrī over the dispute over smoking which al-Shaykh Idrīs held to have "heard" from the Prophet as being ḥarām (unlawful).⁽²⁾ When al-Ajhūrī dismissed that claim, he was said to have been struck by blindness through the baraka of al-Shaykh Idrīs which he had to recognize in the end.⁽³⁾

Another Ṣūfī Shaykh who was widely known for his karāmāt and who also emerged at the time was al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. Ḥassūna. Al-Shaykh Ḥasan who was said to have received his initiation in the Ṣūfī Path from the Prophet was reported to have experienced khalwa retreat for several years at Bā'ūḍa and came out as a saint of miracles.⁽⁴⁾

Among his karāmāt was the reported restoration of life of his disciple 'Afīsha b. Abbakar who had drowned,⁽⁵⁾ and the daughter of the boatman of al-Khashshāb.⁽⁶⁾

It was due to the rising prestige of the Ṣūfī saints and

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.69.

2. Ibid., p.54.

3. Ibid., p.55.

4. Ibid., p.146.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

as a direct result of the manifestation of the karāmāt attributed to those emerging Ṣūfī saints (such as al-Hamīm and al-Shaykh Idrīs) that the orthodox ‘ulamā seem to have been induced and motivated to seek to join the Ṣūfī Orders. By taking such a step the ‘ulamā seem to have been protecting their own status which seems to have been eroded by the emergence of the Ṣūfī saints.

Reference could be made here to al-Shaykh ‘Abdallāh al-‘Arakī who, as alluded to above,⁽¹⁾ had rejected the call of al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī to join the Qādiriyya Order.⁽²⁾

However, although now he was a recognized ‘ālim and a State-appointed judge,⁽³⁾ yet, when he saw that the disciples of al-Bahārī because of their karāmāt [al-Hamīm's] were obeyed by the Funj and the Arabs he got jealous and seems to have regretted the chance he had lost.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, in order to save his image and to make good the damage done, he decided to join the Ṣūfī Path, at the hands of al-Shaykh al-Bahārī. However, by the time he reached Mecca, al-Shaykh al-Bahārī had died⁽⁵⁾, so ‘Abdallāh al-‘Arakī who

1. See p.55 above, and al-Tabaqāt, p.235.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.253.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

seems to have been desperate about joining the Sūfī Path was initiated by al-Shaykh Ḥabīballāh al-‘Ajamī - the successor of al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī.⁽¹⁾

Another example of the ‘ulamā’ who were induced to join the Sūfī Orders was that of al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn. When al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn heard of the victory of al-Shaykh Idrīs over al-Ajhūrī⁽²⁾, he came, accompanied by twenty of his students, to appraise the spiritual and the academic calibre of al-Shaykh Idrīs for themselves.⁽³⁾ Hence, they acknowledged his superior knowledge of Islamic teachings which they believed he had acquired through his baraka and consequently they all rendered obedience to him and al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn and his students asked him to initiate them in the Sūfī Path.⁽⁴⁾ Thus al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn, in turn, emerged as a Sūfī Shaykh - combining ‘ilm and sufism.⁽⁵⁾ Another ‘ālim who sought to join the Sūfī Order was Muḥammad al-Masallami b. Abū Wanīsa who, at first, posed himself as an ignorant man, and when al-Shaykh Dafa‘allāh discovered his intention, admitted him to a khalwa of meditation from which he emerged as a saint - a possessor of baraka and karāmāt.⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.254.

2. Ibid., pp.54-55.

3. Ibid., p.56.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p.235.

6. Ibid., pp.84-88.

There were other 'ulamā' like al-faqīh Ḥamad al-Turābi who, when he discovered that his own brother, who was not an 'ālim, could through his Ṣūfī baraka, stretch his arm across the river, gave up the teaching of Khalīl altogether and entered a khalwa of meditation for thirty-two months and came out as a highly reputable saint.⁽¹⁾

Meanwhile fierce competition - and even rivalry - seems to have risen amongst the emerging Ṣūfīs of the time over the chair of the chief khalīfa of the Order.⁽²⁾ Hence, there arose independent Ṣūfī Shaykhs - each proclaiming himself as the chief representative of the Order and claiming the manifestation of karāmāt and establishing a Ṣūfī centre.

Reference could be made in this respect, in particular to those 'ulamā' who joined the Ṣūfī Orders and emerged as renowned Ṣūfī Shaykhs:

- al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī, after being initiated in the Qādiriyya Order by al-Shaykh Ḥabībballāh al-'Ajāmī,⁽³⁾ returned to his home district. There he embarked on guidance and initiation in the Ṣūfī Path. His tarīqa was said to have spread more than the others and to have gained more popularity than that of the

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.162-3.

2. For elaboration on this issue, see Qarībullah, op. cit., pp.134-212.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.254.

disciples of Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī because he sought it in its place.⁽¹⁾ Thus he guided the people in 'ilm al-zāhir and al-bātin,⁽²⁾ (in the sciences of Sharī'a and Sūfism).

- Al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab who was initiated in the Sūfī Path by both al-Tilmisānī al-Maghribī and al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Misrī, emerged as a great Sūfī shaykh, a possessor of baraka and maker of karāmāt. When Dongola was struck by famine, he was said to have supplied the people with palm leaves which, through his baraka, were converted into silver.⁽³⁾ Not only that, but he was said to have been in control of the king of the seven kings of jinn,⁽⁴⁾ and that the kings of Sennar and the kings of Ja'al rendered him obedience.⁽⁵⁾ Al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā as an 'ālim and a Sūfī Shaykh was thus one of those who combined 'ilm and Sufism.

- Al-Shaykh Ya'qūb b. Bān al-Naqā, after completing his study of 'ilm under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir, returned home and succeeded his father who had initiated him in the Sūfī Order.⁽⁶⁾ He was reported to have differed with al-Shaykh

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.254.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.349.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p.348.

6. Ibid., p.373.

al-Hamīm,⁽¹⁾ and when the latter tried to strip him of his title and instal his brother 'Īsā in his place, the baraka of al-Shaykh Ya'qūb caused the imposed khalīfa to go blind.⁽²⁾ Hence, al-Shaykh Ya'qūb retained his title and post and became famous for his guidance in the Ṣūfī Path and for the teaching of 'ilm and for legal fatwa and conduction of justice.⁽³⁾

- Al-Shaykh Badawī Abū Dulayq (d. 1118/1707),⁽⁴⁾ who studied Khalil under al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn, was reported to have claimed that on several occasions he experienced visions that indicated that he would be a man of a great spiritual status.⁽⁵⁾ The more important visions seem to have been the ones in which he was reported to have claimed that, while he was in a khalwa, he was chosen [in a vision] as the khalīfa of the Order of al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī [in the Sudan] - succeeding al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb.⁽⁶⁾ Thus he proclaimed himself, not only as a Ṣūfī saint, but as the second khalīfa of the Qādiriyya Order in the Funj land.⁽⁷⁾

- Al-Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Bān al-Naqā (d.1167/1754) was the third

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.373.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.124.

5. Ibid., pp.116-120.

6. Ibid., pp.118-9

7. Ibid., p.116.

khalīfa of the Qādiriyya Order in the Funj kingdom.⁽¹⁾

Like al-Shaykh Badawī Abū Dulayq before him.⁽²⁾ al-Shaykh Ṣāliḥ was reported to have claimed that he was chosen (in a vision) by the Prophet and al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir to take over the khilāfa from al-Shaykh Badawī.⁽³⁾ Hence al-Shaykh Ṣāliḥ established himself as the khalīfa of the Qādiriyya Order.

Mention should also be made of famous orthodox ‘ulamā’ who joined the Ṣūfī Path (thus combining ‘ilm and Sūfism) and who flourished in their own right in their own regions as independent Ṣūfī shaykhs, such as:

- Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥamadtū⁽⁴⁾ at Nūrī who established a dynasty of Ṣūfī ‘ulamā’ and possessors of baraka such as his son Madani al Nāṭiq (the one who spoke from his grave).⁽⁵⁾

- Al-Shaykh al-Masallamī b. Abū Wanīsa, an ex-student of al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir who was reported to have combined ‘ilm and Sūfism and embarked on teaching and guidance in the Ṣūfī Path.⁽⁶⁾ He was also reported to have established

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.239.

2. See p.67, above.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.241-243.

4. Ibid., p.257.

5. Ibid. p.352.

6. Ibid., p.79.

an independent Sūfī centre (in northern Gezira) run by his descendants who emerged as Sūfī saints, too. Among them was al-Shaykh al-Qaddāl who was reported to have been seen flying on his bed.⁽¹⁾

- Al-Shaykh Khūjalī b. 'Abd al-Rahmān (d.1155)⁽²⁾ was one of the most famous Sūfī Shaykhs during the Funj era. He was known for his strict adherence to the Kitāb, the Sunnah and following his Shādhilī masters in their teachings and practices.⁽³⁾ Of his reported karamāt was his claim that he had saved the dying Fātima b. 'Ubayd from the angel of death;⁽⁴⁾ and that he was said to have caused the river to flood.⁽⁵⁾

Another outstanding Sūfī Shaykh [of the Shādhilī Order] who emerged and established an independent centre, was al-Shaykh Hamad b. al-Majdhūb (d.1190/1777).⁽⁶⁾ Al-Shaykh Hamad was reported to have combined 'ilm and Sūfism and embarked on disseminating both.⁽⁷⁾ His famous centre at al-Dāmer continued to flourish for a long time afterwards and to extend its influence across the country.⁽⁸⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.84.

2. Ibid., p.202.

3. Ibid., p.193.

4. Ibid., pp.199-200.

5. Ibid., p.198.

6. Ibid., p.189.

7. Ibid.

8. See the khalwas of al-Majādhīb, pp.194-223, below.

Henceforth, almost every Ṣūfī 'ālim emerged as a saint or Ṣūfī Shaykh and was believed by his followers of the masses to have been in possession of baraka and to have manifested a number of karāmāt.

These karāmāt, which were widely held as substantial evidence of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs' spiritual powers, were reported to have covered almost all aspects of life during the Funj era, and to a lesser degree in the subsequent periods.

The main areas of the manifested karāmāt, as alluded to above, were stated to have included the following:

"a knowledge of the hidden thought of men and of future events; power over animals and inanimate objects; ability to fly in the air and walk over the surface of water; the art of healing by prayers or incantation and even of restoring the dead to life."⁽¹⁾

It was as a result of these miraculous powers of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs that the masses came to have unquestioned belief in their khalwa saints. To these masses "the sacred, the baraka, the unseen, the supernatural and their appearances were very real...The cult of the saint, both alive or dead, was their religion".⁽²⁾

1. Hillelson, "Aspects", JRAS, p.668.

2. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.100.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW THE KHALWA BECOMES AN INSTITUTION OF LEARNING

What is of concern to us from the foregoing was that the khalwa had been depicted as the centre of the Ṣūfī rituals and karamāt and seems to have become the focus of attention of the masses - the followers of the numerous Ṣūfī Shaykhs who emerged from these khalwas. All this seems to have resulted in the wide spread of the idea and practices of the khalwa.

Meanwhile, a parallel and more significant development was taking place - the gradual transformation of the khalwa to an institution of learning. This development seems to have come primarily as a result of the entry of the 'ulamā' into the Ṣūfī Path.

With the dominance of the Ṣūfī Orders in the Sudan, almost all of the 'ulamā' seem to have joined their ranks. According to Trimingham, mysticism so completely pervaded the Sudan that most of the representatives of the Shari'a were also the representatives of that deeper aspect of religious life.⁽¹⁾

The common terms used in al-Tabaqāt describing that phenomenon were: "those who combined, or united, 'ilm and Ṣūfism" - as has been referred to above.⁽²⁾

As a result of this development the same person "who combined

1. Trimingham, S., op. cit., p.130.

2. See examples of Ṣūfī Shaykhs.

'ilm and Ṣūfism" was a teacher conducting the teaching of the Qur'ān or 'ilm at the mosque (the original Islamic institution of learning) and, also, performing his Ṣūfī rituals at his khalwa.

Since both institutions were usually adjacent to each other - as could be inferred from the anecdote of al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir and his student, 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī⁽¹⁾ - the khalwa which was the focus of attention and the seat of karāmāt seems to have gradually eclipsed the mosque (the masjid), took over its teaching function and gradually developed into an important educational institution, that overshadowed the mosque and eventually supplanted it.

This point seems to have been confirmed by 'Abd al-Majīd, according to whom the development came as a result of the fact that the Ṣūfī teacher al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir, who emerged before the arrival of al-Bahārī in the Sudan, used to have both his mosque, for study (of the Malikite fiqh), and his khalwa for Ṣūfī meditation, erected on the same site.⁽²⁾ Accordingly, he believes, the people became so lenient in their usage of the term khalwa [which denotes the Ṣūfī cell of meditation which he had transferred from Egypt] that it became synonymous with the teaching masjid.⁽³⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.253.

2. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.100.

3. Ibid.

A similar view seems to have been expressed by Yūsuf Faḍl Ḥasan who states that when the 'ulamā' united 'ilm and Sūfism the mosques were used as centres for their educational and devotional activities. Around these mosques, khalwas were established for both the Sūfī shaykh and his aspirants to conduct their Sūfī rituals. However, these khalwas were also used as places of instruction - thus the same khalwa combined both services [meditation and instruction], as the same teacher had combined both.⁽¹⁾ With the dominance of the Sūfī culture in the Sudan, the term khalwa became more indicative of the institution of learning.⁽²⁾

Somewhat the same idea of how the khalwa was transformed into an educational institution was expressed by 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib who says: "the idea was that the religious teachers sought to be alone in pursuit of mystical meditation or asceticism; then as the Qur'ān teaching and all literacy education became associated with the fakis (khalwa teachers) who practised seclusion in one way or another, the word khalwa came to mean the Qur'ān school".⁽³⁾

From the above, it seems clear that the development of the

1. Al-Ṭabaqāt, pp. 13-14.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Ṭayyib, A., "The Changing Customs", p. 58.

khalwa into an educational institution, in addition to its original function of Ṣūfī meditation, was a result of the fact that the same teacher of the Qur'ān, or 'ilm, was a Ṣūfī practitioner conducting all religious activities from his khalwa - that is, activities of the Ṣūfī Path in addition to his original role as a teacher of 'ilm and/or the Qur'ān.

As to how the actual process of transforming the khalwa of meditation into a khalwa of instruction, there seems to be no detailed information on this aspect. However, most probably the Ṣūfī shaykh received his students for the Shari'a subjects - the Qur'ān and 'ilm - at his khalwa of meditation, in the same way as he received some of them as novices for initiation in the Ṣūfī Path. And it might, also, be that he instructed some of his Ṣūfī followers in the Shari'a subjects besides his Ṣūfī rituals.

At any rate, the study or the instructional activity of the children at the khalwa does not seem to have been taking place simultaneously, and under the same roof, with the Ṣūfī rituals of the shaykh. But rather, the children either assembled outside that khalwa or had a separate and more spacious khalwa for the purpose of education adjacent to the shaykh's.

As to who first transformed the khalwa of meditation into a khalwa of study, concrete evidence seems to be lacking. Although 'Abd al-Majīd claims that it was al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir who had first introduced the khalwa for

meditation which [because of its proximity to the mosque of study] eventually came to be known, too, as an institution of learning⁽¹⁾, the evidence cited earlier about the introduction of the khalwa of Sūfī meditation suggests otherwise. As mentioned above, it was Shaykh Maḥmūd al-Arakī, who preceded al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān by more than a generation, who, on the White Nile, had developed the khalwa for both purposes. As alluded to above, al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī was the initiator and head of the Bakriyya - a branch of the Khalwatiyya Order - in the Sudan.⁽²⁾ Thus he was the first one to have emphasized the khalwa in the Funj kingdom.⁽³⁾ At the same time it should be noted that he was also a dedicated ‘alim who established seventeen schools (or fifteen khalwas)⁽⁴⁾ for teaching ‘ilm and the Qur’ān, along the White Nile, between Alays (al-Kawwa) and Khartoum.⁽⁵⁾

The khalwas (the schools) established, or initiated, by al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī seem to have lasted for more than a hundred and fifty years, i.e., from the time of his return from al-Azhar at about 938/1531⁽⁶⁾ till the final destruction of these khalwas by Shilluk and by Umm Laḥm, the year of famine and smallpox in 1095/1684.⁽⁷⁾

1. ‘Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., p.100.

2. See above

3. See above

4. Trimingham, op. cit., p.100..

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.345.

6. See p.49,n.1 , above.

7. Al-Tabaqāt, p.345; Holt and Daly, op. cit., p.34.

Meanwhile, the idea and practice of the khalwa as an institution of learning seems to have become an established fact.

By the time of the sons of Jābir who were reported to have emerged a generation after al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī,⁽¹⁾ the khalwa came to be known as a place of study. Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir who, like al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī studied at al-Azhar, was said to have brought the idea and practice of the Ṣūfī khalwa from Egypt,⁽²⁾ and seems to have transformed that khalwa to serve also as an institution of learning.

Al-Tabaqāt refers to this development as follows: "Shaykh Isma‘īl b. Jābir [brother and a student of al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir] sat at his khalwa (‘Abd al-Raḥmān's) after him...and of those who studied under him were al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn and al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥamadū".⁽³⁾

However, by the time of Isma‘īl's successor - Idris b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir - the khalwa ceased to function.

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1. MacMichael, op. cit., p.10.
 2. ‘Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., p.100.
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.47.
 4. Ibid., p.48.

Hence under Shaykh Isma'īl b. Jābir and Idrīs b. 'Abd al-Rahmān the khalwa, as an educational institution, seems to have become an established fact.

Thus, by this time (early 11th/17th century) with the increasing dominance of Ṣūfism and with more 'ulamā' joining the Ṣūfī Path, the khalwa, as an educational establishment, seems to have been increasingly gaining popularity. In confirmation of this trend, al-Tabaqāt cites references to representatives of prominent families of teachers who had developed and spread such khalwas.

Al-Shaykh Daf'allāh al-'Arakī (1003/1595 - 1094/1685)⁽¹⁾ at Abū Ḥarāz used to have a khalwa for the instruction of children (khalwat al-Sibyān) besides the khalwas for the Ṣūfī rituals: Muḥammad al-Masallamī who, in order to be initiated

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.209-210.

in the Sūfī Path travelled to al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh at Abū Ḥarāz and posed himself as an ignorant man coming from the desert, was at first admitted to the khalwa of Mu'allim al-Sibyān (to the khalwa of the children's teacher) where he pretended learning the Arabic alphabet.⁽¹⁾

However, the origin of that khalwa seems to go back to al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī, the founder of al-'Arakiyyīn Qādiriyya Order.⁽²⁾ In reference to that earlier period Abū al-Qāsim b. Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (mid 19th century) was reported to have said that al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī used to have several khalwas where each was used by a group of students for study.⁽³⁾

In Eastern Sudan, at the khalwas of al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. Ḥusūna (d.1075/1665)⁽⁴⁾ the students used to write copies of the Qur'ān.⁽⁵⁾ From al-Ghubush family al-Shaykh Ḥamad [b. Abd al-Majīd al-Aghbash] was said to have studied under his father and succeeded him at his khalwa, and many students studied under him too - amongst them was Ḥamad al-Majdhūb (1105/1693 - 1190/1776)⁽⁶⁾. Another teacher from the same family (al-Ghubush),

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.84.

2. Ibid., p.254.

3. Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.104.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.149.

5. Ibid., pp.139, 141.

6. Ibid., pp.155, 189.

al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Aghbash, was reported to have taught al mīrāth - the Law of Inheritance - at his khalwa at al-Qoz (al-Abwab region) to his ex-student - Qādī 'Abd al-Muḥ'īm and his group for seven years.⁽¹⁾

At al-Qoz, too, and from the family of Ṣughayrūn, Abū al-Ḥasan Ṣalīḥ al-'Udī who was said to have shared with al faqīh Ballāl b. Muḥammad al-Azraq (flourished 1108-1138) his introductory session of teaching fiqh (Majlis al-ṭaṭtiḥa), used to read and revise to the students at his khalwa.⁽²⁾

At al-Ḥalfāya, Abū al-Ḥasan Ḍafa'allāh b. Dayfallāh, who was outstanding for teaching 'ilm al-farā'id and khalīl, succeeded his father at al-khalwa.⁽³⁾ Al-Ḥalfāya Abū Surūr al Fadlī used to teach al-'aqā'id at his khalwas which were to the south of Ḥalfaya.⁽⁴⁾

Khalwas, then, seem to have spread to Kordufan region in western Sudan. Al-Shaykh Mukhtār b. Muḥammad b. Jūdat-Allāh (12th/18th century) had a khalwa with a large number of students.⁽⁵⁾

From the foregoing, it seems to have been clearly demonstrated

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1. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.359.
 2. Ibid., p.78.
 3. Ibid., p.66.
 4. Ibid., p.106.
 5. Ibid., p.346, n./4.

how the khalwa has gradually been transformed from a personal Sūfi cell, for seclusion and meditation, into a private Islamic institution of learning, taking over the educational (and other) functions of the mosque, and hence, providing the masses with free religious education (a blend of orthodox and Sūfī teachings) together with lodging and upkeep, for free, too.

Consequently, the term "khalwa", in the Sudan, has, by time, come to be universally indicative of an Islamic educational institution centred primarily on the Qur'ān.

In confirmation of this development it seems relevant to cite references to the khalwa (as an educational institution) made by a number of prominent scholars.

Speaking about education in the 19th century, in the Sudan, 'Abd al-Majīd states that the khalwa was the term most widely used in the Sudan in reference to an institution of learning.⁽¹⁾

Confirming this and indicating other functions of the khalwa, Hillelson writes that, "a school was called a khalwa - a term used for the retreat of ascetics and for the guest chambers attached to the settlements of the holy men".⁽²⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., vol.I, p.79.

2. Hillelson, op. cit., p.665.

Tracing back the emergence of the khalwa as an institution of learning to the 16th century, Trimingham says, "...the sons of Jābir⁽¹⁾ founded in the 16th century khalwas in the Shāyqīyya country and acquired considerable influence".⁽¹⁾

With the dominance of the Sūfī in the Sudan, the word khalwa became the most widely-used term indicative of an institution of learning.⁽²⁾

"Early in the 16th century Qur'ānic schools were established in the Sudan on a large scale; such schools were called khalwas".⁽³⁾

"Between the 16th and the 19th centuries the mosque and the khalwa were the only organized places for education in the Sudan⁽⁴⁾...and the khalwa was the most important."⁽⁵⁾

"These faki schools, in whatever degree, were known as khalwas".⁽⁶⁾

1. Trimingham, op. cit., p.100.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.13.

3. Al-Qūṣī, An Evaluation of the Recent Educational Reforms in the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, (UNESCO, Paris, 1972), p.1.

4. Al-Bāqir, "Religious Education", op. cit., p.78.

5. Bashīr, p.6.

6. Holt, p.198

CHAPTER FOUR

EXAMPLES OF KHALWA CENTRES OF THE FUNJ PERIOD

A. The Khalwa Centre of the Sons of Jābir

The khalwa centre that flourished under the Sons of Jābir⁽¹⁾ has already been alluded to. It was established at Turunj⁽²⁾ between the middle of the 10th/16th century and the first quarter of the 11th/17th century.⁽³⁾ Its duration seems to have been short.⁽⁴⁾

However, the origin of the khalwa could be traced back to the ancestor of the family al-Shaykh Ghulamallāh b. 'Ā'id, who founded the first seat of learning at Dongola in the second half of the 8th/14th century.⁽⁵⁾ On the other hand, it seems to have

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1. These were Ibrāhīm al-Bulād, 'Abd al-Rahmān, 'Abd al-Rahīm and Ismā'īl (and their sister Fāṭima) sons of Jābir b. 'Awn b. Salīm b. Rubāṭ b. Shaykh Ghulamallāh. They were all distinguished for their learning and piety (al-Tabaqāt, p.47).
 2. Turunj lies on the right bank of the Nile near Karīma and opposite Nūrī (Holt, "The Sons of Jabir", BSOAS, p.150).
 3. Al-Bulād was said to have returned from Egypt about 962 AH, al-Tabaqāt, p.41.
 4. The khalwa was said to have come to an end by the time of the fourth principal or khalīfa of the khalwa - Idrīs b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir (al-Tabaqāt, p.47).
 5. MacMichael, A History of the Arabs in the Sudan, vol.II, p.35.

been revived through its immediate extension, by way of kinship and study, the khalwa of al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn, which continued to flourish up to the second half of the 12th/18th century.⁽¹⁾

Hence the learning institutions of the family of the sons of Jābir could be considered as among the ones that seem to have survived for very long periods. At any rate, the khalwa of the sons of Jābir seems to have had a great impact on the dissemination of learning in the Funj kingdom, as could be illustrated by the fact that most of the founders of khalwa centres had their studies under the prominent teachers of the family of Jābir.⁽²⁾

The khalwa of the Sons of Jābir seems to have evolved from the mosque (masjid) which the eldest son, Ibrāhīm al-Bulād, was said to have established (at Turunĵ) after his return from his studies at al-Azhar to his home district - Turunĵ Island - on the main Nile in the Shāyqīyya region, at the beginning of the reign of al-Shaykh ‘Ajīb the Great, about A.H.962.⁽³⁾

At al-Azhar al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Bulād was reported to have received his studies at the hands of the Malikite jurist faqīh

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1. See the khalwa Centre of Ṣughayrūn, below.
 2. See the outstanding students of the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir who later flourished as great teachers at the end of this section.
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.41, n.10.

al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Banūfarī (d.998/1590)⁽¹⁾, as did his two brothers - 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Ismā'īl and some of their students afterwards.⁽²⁾ Hence, at his masjid he embarked on teaching fiqh according to the Malikite school of Islamic Law - and in particular through the two standard fiqh text books: Mukhtasar Khalīl⁽³⁾ and al-Risāla⁽⁴⁾, which al-Bulād was said to have been the first to introduce in the Funj territory.⁽⁵⁾

Although he taught for only seven years before his premature death,⁽⁶⁾ yet his masjid became so reputed for learning that it attracted students from distant places and continued to function under his brothers as an important centre of Islamic teachings.

However, it was under his successor and brother, al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir, that the masjid seems to have developed into a khalwa of learning, and to have flourished most. As alluded to above, al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir was not only a learned man but a practising Sūfi Shaykh who used to frequent his khalwa for his Sūfī rituals,⁽⁷⁾ while pursuing his function

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.46, n.9.

2. See 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir, Ismā'īl b. Jābir, Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn, Ḥamadū, below.

3. See "Curricula and Books", below.

4. Ibid.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.46.

6. Ibid., p.257.

7. Ibid., p.253.

as a teacher at the masjid.

His succession to the teaching post of his predecessor and brother, al-Būlād (and to his administrative post) has been stated in al-Tabaqāt as: "he sat in his brother's place and taught fiqh and all the arts".⁽¹⁾ But the direct reference to the khalwa as a place for learning under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān was mentioned in association with his successor - his brother Ismā'īl - as follows:

"...al-Shaykh Ismā'īl b. Jābir who was taught fiqh (Khalīl and al-Risāla) by his brother al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān, and at al-Azhar, also ⁽²⁾...sat after his brother at the khalwa, and many people benefited from him; and among those he taught were al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn and al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥamadū."⁽³⁾

It seems that the khalwa continued to flourish under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir for about forty years.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.252.

2. Ibid., p.47.

3. Ibid.

4. (a) Ibrāhīm al-Būlād taught Khalīl seven times (al-Tabaqāt, p.46) and he actually taught for seven years (ibid., p.257).
(b) Ṣughayrūn taught Khalīl 15 times (khatmas), (ibid., p.238) and his actual teaching time was 15 years (ibid., p.63).
(c) Al-Zayn b. Ṣughayrun completed 50 khatmas of Khalīl (ibid.,

During this relatively long teaching career he was said to have extended the services of his teaching centre to two other places. He was said to have established a mosque (most probably a khalwa) at Korti and another at al-Daffar, and hence he used to divide the year among the three masjids (khalwas) - spending four months at each.⁽¹⁾

It seems also interesting to note that, of his many students, forty were reported to have distinguished themselves and reached the stage of qutb in learning and piety.⁽²⁾ It must be through these graduates of the khalwa of Jābir's sons - the students of al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān, and those taught by his brothers - that the influence of this institution in teachings, and to some extent the Sūfi khalwa practices, seems to have spread to other parts of the Funj kingdom, as would be referred to, below.

However, upon his death, he was succeeded by his brother Ismā'īl, as indicated above, and the latter was succeeded by his nephew - Idrīs b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir⁽³⁾ in whose period of

p.238), and his teaching career lasted for 50 years (ibid., p.63). Hence a khatma seems to stand for a year's course; and accordingly, al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir who completed 40 khatmas of Khalīl (ibid., p.252) must have taught for forty years).

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.252.
2. Ibid., qutb seems to have been regarded as one of the highest Sūfi ranks.
3. Ibid., p.48.

office the khalwa seems to have come to an end, for it was abandoned as a teaching institution. According to al-Tabaqāt, "al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir sat for teaching after his uncle al-Shaykh Ismā'īl, but during his period the khalwa disintegrated."⁽¹⁾ The cause was attributed to his marriage to the Queen of Kajaba who insisted that the khalwa be transferred to her palace, for she was not satisfied with the arrangement of her husband seeing her at the week-ends only. Such an offer which seems to have been acceptable to the teacher, was rejected by the students, who refused to move to the Queen's palace out of piety, for fear of being distracted from their studies by the Queen's beautiful maidens.⁽²⁾ Hence, they dispersed to other khalwas of more dedicated Shaykhs. A group was said to have joined al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn (at al-Qoz, al-Abwāb region), and another joined al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥamadū (at Nūrī), amongst whom was al-Shaykh Ḥamad b. 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash.⁽³⁾

Thus, the khalwa of Jābir's sons, on Turīng Island, seems to have come to an end. Nevertheless its impact seems to have been very considerable. Despite its short period of flourishing, its mission was carried over by its prominent graduates all over the Funj kingdom. Of these graduates reference could be

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.48.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.49.

made to those who established khalwas that flourished as famous centres of learning and who developed into prominent families of teachers that managed those centres for centuries through a hereditary system of succession, such as:

- Al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī who founded the family's Ṣūfī tradition and instituted its khalwa learning which flourished into a great centre under al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī at Abū Hurāz, on the Blue Nile, Gezira region.⁽¹⁾
- Al-Shaykh Ya'qūb b. Bān al-Naqā al-Darīr whose khalwa centre flourished at al-Ḥamra, Sennar region, Gezira.⁽²⁾
- Al-Shaykh al-Musallamī Abū Wanīsa, who established a khalwa that developed under his successors into an important centre - north of al-Managil - Gezira region.⁽³⁾
- 'Isā b. Ṣāliḥ al-Bidayrī, who started a seat of learning at Dongola that flourished into an important khalwa centre under his son - al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Isā - Suwār al-Dhahab.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.252-5; 206-10.

2. Ibid., pp.373-4.

3. Ibid., pp.79-88.

4. See "The khalwa of Suwār al-Dhahab", below.

- Al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash, whose khalwa centre, at al-Ghubush, flourished into a famous institution for teaching the Qur'ān and its sciences. It should be noted here that 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash was a student at both the khalwa of Jabir's Sons and that of Suwār al-Dhahab⁽¹⁾ Dongola.
- Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Hamadtū, who started a learning centre at Nūrī that flourished under him and his descendants into a highly reputable teaching institution.⁽²⁾
- Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn - nephew of the sons of Jābir who was a companion of Hamadtū when they were both students under al-Shaykh Ismā'īl b. Jābir and al-Shaykh al-Banūfārī, at al-Azhar, and who established his famous khalwa at al-Fujayja (al-Qoz) al-Abwāb region.⁽³⁾

The above mentioned graduates of the khalwa centre of Jābir's sons all became famous teachers, in charge of their khalwas as will be discussed below - in addition to others who seem to have flourished after them.

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280.

2. Ibid. pp.257-8.

3. See below under "The khalwa centre of Ṣughayrūn"; al-Abwāb refers to the Ja'aliyyin region between the confluence of river Atbara and the Nile and Shendi; it also refers to Kabūshiyya or Merawī. It was a meeting place of many commercial routes (al-Tabaqāt, p.44, n.2).

B. Khalwa Centre of Ṣughayrūn at al-Fujayja (al-Abwāb Region)

The founder was Shaykh Muḥammad Sarḥān - nicknamed Ṣughayrūn (little).⁽¹⁾ His father was Sarḥān b. Muḥammad b. Sarḥān, a cultivator from Argo island,⁽²⁾ and his mother was Fāṭima bint Jābir who was said to have been equal to her four brothers - the Sons of Jābir - in 'ilm and piety.⁽³⁾

Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn learnt the Qur'ān and fiqh (Khalīl and al-Risāla) under his maternal uncle al-Shaykh Ismā'īl b. Jābir at Turnaq and was given an ijāza (licence) for teaching.⁽⁴⁾ Then, like his uncle before him, he travelled to Egypt and studied under the same teacher at al-Azhar, the Mālikite jurist al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Banūfarī.⁽⁵⁾ On his return from al-Azhar he embarked on teaching at his uncles' khalwa at Turunġ⁽⁶⁾, most probably succeeding his teacher al-Shaykh Ismā'īl b. Jābir.⁽⁷⁾

However, his cousins were said to have become jealous of him and plotted to kill him and, as a result, he was forced to leave his home island altogether.⁽⁸⁾ Then, through the assistance of

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.47, 235.

2. Ibid., p.226.

3. Ibid., p.47.

4. Ibid., pp.235-6.

5. Ibid., p.236.

6. Ibid.

7. See the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir, above.

8. Al-Tabaqāt, p.236.

the newly installed Funj monarch, King Bādī b. Rubāt (ascended the throne 1020/1611-2) who seems to have been a spiritual adherent of al-Shaykh Ṣugharūn⁽¹⁾ the latter and his family (his mother, his wives and children) in addition to his students, moved south to al-Abwāb region and settled at the site of al-Fujayja (al-Qoz) where he established his mosque (khalwa) about 1021/1612.⁽²⁾

At al-Fujayja he earnestly embarked on teaching the Qur'ān and fiqh and his khalwa by time rose in fame and popularity and was said to have attracted students from all over the Funj kingdom.⁽³⁾

Meanwhile, al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn was said to have established an excellent spiritual relationship with the famous Ṣūfī of the Qādirīyya Order al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb and followed him in the Ṣūfi Path.⁽⁴⁾

Thus, al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn seems to have added to his attributes the title of a Ṣūfī Shaykh - or the combination of 'ilm and Ṣūfism.⁽⁵⁾ From now on, it seems, his institution of learning could be considered as being fully transformed into a khalwa. Al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn, however, did not live long, and

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.236.

2. Ibid., p.237.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp.56, 236.

5. Ibid., p.235.

died in A.H.1036 after teaching only for fiteeen years at his newly established khalwa.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, even during this short period, al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn seems to have laid down the solid foundation for the family tradition in teaching at their famous centre at al-Fujayja (al-Qoz), and to have set the example for his descendants and students to follow.

Under his successor - his son al-Zayn - the khalwa seems to have witnessed its golden age. Al-Zayn was born in the Shayqīyya region and was said to have been taught [and initiated in the Ṣūfī Path] by his father.⁽²⁾ He lived longer than his father and, inheriting his posts, he taught for fifty years - thus he was reported to have taught three generations: the grandfathers, the fathers and the grandsons.⁽³⁾ During al-Shaykh al-Zayn's long period of khīlāfa the khalwa seems to have reached its highest fame as a learning institution. It was said to have embraced more than a thousand students, coming from all parts of the Funj kingdom.⁽⁴⁾ And, as a result, all the faqīhs and judges of the region and even as far as Dār Ṣulayḥ (Waddāy) beyond, were said to have been taught (at the khalwa) by al-Shaykh al-Zayn or by his students.⁽⁵⁾ When al-Shaykh al-Zayn died in 1086/1075

1. His son and successor al-Shaykh al-Zayn seems to have taught for fifty years and died in 1086 - hence al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn must have died in 1036 (al-Tabaqāt, pp.74-76).

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.74.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

the administration of the khalwa was passed over to the designated khalīfa - al-Shaykh al-Zayn's favourite son - Muḥammad al-Azraq, who had been taught fiqh by both his father and uncle Ibrāhīm al-Ḥajar.⁽¹⁾

However, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Azraq though he was designated for succession, yet he actually took over after his uncle Ibrāhīm al-Ḥajar (d. 1098 A.H.).

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Azraq continued managing the khalwa, teaching and guiding his followers till he died in 1108/1696.⁽²⁾ Hence, he seems to have been in office for ten years only.

In line with the family tradition, the khalwa was run by his successor - his son Ballāl, who was taught by his father.⁽³⁾ It is interesting to note that the name of al-Shaykh Ballāl as a teacher at the khalwa was in most cases associated with his assistant (and brother-in-law) Abū al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUḏī, who was in charge of majlis al-taftīḥa (introducing the new lesson) and revision to the students at his khalwa, according to al-Ṭabaqāt.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.357.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.125.

4. Ibid., pp.286,

Then, following the death of al-Shaykh Ballāl, the khalwa was said to have been administered by the fifth khalīfa, his son al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān who had been taught by his father and his uncle Abu al-Ḥasan al-‘Udī and licenced to teach and give fatwa.⁽¹⁾

Hence, he embarked on carrying on the family's tradition of teaching at their centre at al-Fujayja . Al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān was said to have taught for about seventeen years only and died in 1155/1743.⁽²⁾

It should be noted that throughout its history the khalwa of Ṣughayrūn's family at al-Fujayjah seems to have been specialized in teaching fiqh - and in particular the two standard textbooks of the Malikite School: Khalīl and al-Risāla in the same manner as did the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir at Turnaq before. Hence, it seems to have been an extension of the Jābir's khalwa, both by way of kinship and delivery of the same message.

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.286.

2. Ibid., p.287.

C. Khalwa of Suwār al-Dhahab at Dongola

One of the earliest and most famous khalwas was the one that flourished under al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Isā b. Ṣāliḥ al-Budayrī - better known as Suwār al-Dhahab (Gold Bracelet).⁽¹⁾

The khalwa seems to have been started by his father al-Shaykh 'Isā b. Ṣāliḥ al-Budayrī who received his studies at the hands of al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir at Turunḡ, and was counted among his "forty quṭbs" who distinguished themselves in 'ilm and piety.⁽²⁾ Al-Shaykh 'Isā seems to have died at an early age - or at an age when his son and successor, Suwār al-Dhahab, was still studying. He was reported to have taught his son Muḥammad the Qur'ān and covered with him only one and a half khatma (sealing or round) of reading the textbook Khalīl - up to the lesson of "The Funerals" and then died.⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad then received instruction in dogmatic theology ('ilm al-kalām or tawḥīd) and the sciences of the Qur'ān, in addition to Ṣūfism, at the hands of the immigrant 'ālim and Ṣūfī Shaykh, al-Tilmisānī al-Maghribī.⁽⁴⁾ He was also reported to have received further instruction in these very subjects at the hands of another immigrant Ṣūfī 'ālim al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Gharm

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.348.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.; he was said to have been initiated in the Qadiriyya Order (Holt, p.30).

al-Kimānī al-Misrī.⁽¹⁾

Thus al-Shaykh Muḥammad Suwār al-Dhahab became one of those who combined ‘ilm and Sūfism.

As a result of his academic qualifications and Sūfī reputation al-Shaykh Muḥammad Suwār al-Dhahab became the most famous pioneer ‘ālim for teaching the Qur’ānic sciences and tawhīd, to the extent that his khalwa attracted students from all over the Funj kingdom and even from neighbouring countries.⁽²⁾

As an indication of his high prestige as an ‘ālim and of the popularity of teachings, the size of the halqas of learners at his khalwa was said to have exceeded one thousand, and that the students came to it from even outside the country - from the kingdom of Waddāy (Chād) and Kānem.⁽³⁾

Because of the high social status emanating from his spiritual power, he was said to have been highly regarded by the rulers and the masses - the kings of Dongola, those of the Ja‘liyyīn tribes and even the Funj sultans rendered obedience to him.⁽⁴⁾ Not only that but his khalwa seems to have enjoyed special privileges from King Bādī b. Rubāt (1611-18/1615-22) who

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.348.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

was reported to have granted a jāh (pledge) stating that "all those who studied under al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā were under the protection of Allāh and His Apostle"⁽¹⁾ i.e., protected from harm and exempted from taxation.

In line with the khalwa practices, the administrative and teaching posts of the khalīfa were inherited by his descendants. Indeed, they seem to have been shared by two of his descendants at a time. For example, during his lifetime al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā used to hold a multiplicity of posts - managing the khalwa, teaching the Qur'ān and its sciences, teaching 'ilm and serving as a judge, in addition to guiding his followers in the Sūfī Path. When he died, however, the posts of khalīfa, teaching of 'ilm and serving as a judge were reported to have been held by his son Ḥalālī, and the post of teaching the Qur'ān by another.

Then, when his turn came, al-Shaykh Ziyāda b. al-Nūr b. Muḥammad Suwār al-Dhahab was said to have been in charge of the post of teaching the halqa of the Qur'ān,⁽²⁾ and like his grandfather - al-Shaykh Muḥammad Suwār al-Dhahab - he was reported to have enjoyed great privileges from the kings of Sennar, too. Sultan Dakīn was said to have confirmed and even extended the jāh that had been granted to his grandfather (al-Shaykh Suwār

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.348.

2. Ibid., pp.184, 218, 276.

al-Dhahab) to embrace also all his kin - al-Danaqla.⁽¹⁾ In addition, the King was reported to have sent him fifty slaves in order to serve him and his students, at the khalwa.⁽²⁾ Hence, his halqa of study was said to have increased enormously.⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh Ziyāda was succeeded by his son Ahmad who was said to have excelled him in wealth and status. For example, he was said to have had a boat as large as those of the Red Sea which he used to send every year to his ex-students of the Qur'ān in the region north of Dongola and it would be returned loaded with all types of zakāt.⁽⁴⁾

Al-Shaykh Ahmad, in turn, was succeeded by his son, Muḥammad who acted similar to him in every respect.⁽⁵⁾

Of the outstanding students of al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab the following could be mentioned:⁽⁶⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash, head of al-Ghubush family and founder of their famous khalwa for teaching the Qur'ānic sciences.⁽⁷⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.218; see "Financial Aspect ...", below.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.218.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.; see "Financial Aspect of Khalwa Education", below.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.218.

6. Ibid., pp.42, 348.

7. Ibid., pp.42, 280.

Al-Shaykh 'Īsā b. Kano - a famous teacher of the Qur'ān and its sciences.⁽¹⁾

Al-faqīh Nasr al-Tarjamī, father of the famous 'ālim of Arbajī.⁽²⁾

Al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Mulāh, father of the famous Sūfī, al-Shaykh Khojalī.⁽³⁾

Al-faqīh Husayn Abū Sha'r who studied tawhīd under Suwār al-Dhahab and then taught it to the two sons of Barri: 'Alī and Ibrāhīm.⁽⁴⁾

It is worth mentioning that also at his khalwa al-Shaykh Suwār al-Dhahab initiated in the Sūfī Path men who became famous Sūfī Shaykhs running their own khalwas, such as:⁽⁵⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Awwūda Shakkāl al-Qāriḥ.⁽⁶⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī - nicknamed bayyā' al-matar (rain seller) i.e., believed to have control over the rainfall.⁽⁷⁾

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab and his descendants were buried at Dongola where the shrines of the family were visited.⁽⁸⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.278.

2. Ibid., p.42.

3. Ibid., p.258.

4. Ibid., p.295.

5. Ibid., p.348.

6. Ibid., p.273.

7. Ibid., p.259.

8. Ibid., pp.218, 349.

.D. Khalwas of al-Ghubush - Berber District

This was one of the most important khalwas that flourished during the Funj era, in the second half of the 10th/16th century, in Berber district.⁽¹⁾

The founder was al-faqīh 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Mājid - nicknamed al-Aghbash⁽²⁾ - plural al-Ghubush - hence the name the khalwas of al-Ghubush 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash and his descendants. 'Abdallāh was said to have been born at Berber, and his mother was one of the daughters of al-Sharīf Ḥamad Abū Dunāna.⁽³⁾ He learnt the Qur'ān (and its sciences - and especially its variant readings) at the hands of al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Isā Suwār Dhahab,⁽⁴⁾ and studied fiqh under 'Walad Jābir' - most probably under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir.⁽⁵⁾ It was during his study at the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir at Turnaq that his high reputation - and indeed that of his family afterwards - in connection with the Qur'ānic studies seems to have started.

Al-Tabaqāt relates an interesting anecdote indicating his high ability in the recitation of the Qur'ān which he showed on the occasion of the eclipse of the sun, when he was chosen from

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.42, 280.

2. Ibid., p.280.

3. See 'Early History of Islam in the Sudan', *Ch. I, above*.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280; see the khalwa of Suwār al-Dhahab, above.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280.

amongst his fellow students to lead the special prayer of the eclipse of the sun.⁽¹⁾ 'Abdallāh was a hāfiz and a good reciter, and the people were said to have been so impressed by his excellent recitation of two of the longest chapters of the Qur'ān: al-baqara and āl-'imrān (before the eclipse was over)⁽²⁾ that the King of the Shayqiyyah exclaimed, after prayer, "ni'ma ha al-ghubasha!"⁽³⁾ (God bless you, Dusty). Since then, 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Mājid came to be known by his nickname as "al-Aghbash"⁽⁴⁾ and his family "al-Ghubush".⁽⁵⁾

On his return to his home district - Berber - al-faqīh 'Abdallāh established his khalwa at a site, south of Berber, on the western bank of the main Nile, which has come to be known as al-Ghubush (i.e., both the khalwa and the village that grew around it have derived their name from the founder).⁽⁶⁾ Thus he was reported to have kindled the "Qur'ān's fire" at Berber.⁽⁷⁾ Not only that but al-Aghbash seems to have started a family of teachers, and a hereditary system of succession.

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280.

2. Qur'ān: suras 2 and 3..

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280.

4. Ibid.

5. Information from the khalīfa Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mājid, al-Ghubush, 15th November, 1981.

6. Ibid.

7. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280.

On his death, al-faqīh ‘Abdallāh was succeeded by his son al-faqīh Ḥamad as the first khalīfa of the khalwa.⁽¹⁾

Ḥamad learnt the Qur’ān under his father; then, following his example, he travelled to the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir to study fiqh. However, at the time, the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir under al-Shaykh Idrīs b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir disintegrated as a result of his attempt to transfer it to his wife's palace.⁽²⁾ Hence, Ḥamad b. al-Aghbash, like the rest of the students, abandoned the khalwa of Idrīs b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir at Turnaq and joined that of al-Shaykh Ḥamadtu at Nūrī.⁽³⁾

When he became khalīfa, he continued teaching the same subjects that had been taught by his father at the khalwa - especially the Qur’ān.⁽⁴⁾

It was under al-faqīh Ḥamad's sons (the third generation) however, that the khalwa of al-Ghubush seems to have reached its

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.154.

2. Ibid., p.48.

3. Ibid., p.154.

4. Information from al-khalīfa Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Majīd, al-Ghubush, November, 1981.

highest reputation for learning: al-faqīh Ḥamad b. 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash was said to have had six sons who all became 'ulamā'.⁽¹⁾ Among these, al-faqīh 'Abd al-Mājid and al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān inherited and shared their father's administrative and teaching posts. While al-faqīh 'Abd al-Mājid al-Darīr (the blind) took over the post of the khalīfa and taught the Qur'ān at the khalwa,⁽²⁾ al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān became in charge of teaching the Qur'ānic sciences.⁽³⁾ Hence, in effect these were two halqas or stages or even khalwas: one for teaching the Qur'ān and the other for teaching the sciences of the Qur'ān. It is interesting to note that the teaching post of each of these two brothers seems to have continued as a hereditary right for his direct descendants.

Thus, under al-faqīh 'Abd al-Mājid, who had studied the Qur'ān under his father and fiqh at the hands of al-Shaykh al-'Asar at Nūrī, the khalwa of the Qur'ān was said to have included more than one thousand students and was composed mainly of two groups: the Arabs and the Ḥalanqa.⁽⁴⁾ And, because of his long term of khilafa - of about fifty years - he was said to have taught the grandfathers, the fathers and their children.⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.154.

2. Ibid., p.281.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.280.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

On his death in 1127/1716⁽¹⁾, his teaching post at the khalwa was taken over by his son al-faqīh Ḥamad who received his study of the Qur'ān and fiqh under his father.⁽²⁾

Among the outstanding students of the khalwa, taught by al-faqīh Ḥamad, was the famous faqīh Ḥamad al-Majdhūb II of al-Majādhīb (1105/1693 - 1190/1776).⁽³⁾

The last famous teacher of the Qur'ān of the descendants of 'Abd al-Mājid at the khalwa of al-Ghubush, during the Funj period, seems to have been al-faqīh 'Abdallāh b. Ḥamad b. 'Abd al-Mājid - who succeeded his uncle Mustāfa (brother of Ḥamad and his successor).⁽⁴⁾ In reference to al-faqīh 'Abdallāh as a teacher of the Qur'ān, al-Ṭabaqāt states that "upon his death the teaching of the Qur'ān ceased at the khalwa of al-Ghubush".⁽⁵⁾

On the other hand the halqa or the khalwa of teaching the Qur'ānic sciences under al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥamad became so famous for teaching these subjects that the dissemination of the Qur'ānic sciences throughout the Gezira was attributed to al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān and his khalwa students.⁽⁶⁾ Al-faqīh

1. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.223.

2. Ibid., p.155.

3. Ibid., pp.155, 189; see the khalwa of al-Majādhīb at al-Damer, below, pp.194-223.

4. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.282.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p.281.

'Abd al-Rahmān, it should be mentioned, seems to have been well prepared for his post. He had learnt the Qur'ān under his father, the Qur'ānic sciences under 'Isā b. Kano⁽¹⁾ (a student of Suwār al-Dhahab) and became so versed in the Qur'ānic sciences that he was reported to have written commentaries on the subject, on such books as al-Jazrīyyah, al-Kharāzi, and composed into poems the two books on Aḥkām al-Qur'ān: al-Hidāya and Tuhafat al-Maddāt.⁽²⁾ He seems to have taught these commentaries to his students at the khalwa.

In a similar way to the practice of al-faqīh 'Abd al-Mājid and his descendants, the teaching of the Qur'ānic sciences at the khalwa of 'ilm seems to have been a hereditary practice for the direct descendants of al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥamad b. al-Aghbash. After his death the halqa was taken over by his son al-faqīh Muḥammad⁽³⁾, who was also well qualified for the job. He was reported to have studied the Qur'ān and its sciences under his father ('Abd al-Rahmān), fiqh (Ḥalīl) under al-Shaykh Ballāl b. Muḥammad al-Azraq and Abū al-Ḥasan, and was taught al-Risāla by 'Abd al-Sādiq b. Ḥasīb, and tawḥīd by Busāṭī and Farah b. Arbāb al-Khishn.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.281.

2. Ibid.; see "Subjects and Books" below for information on these books and commentaries.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.359.

4. Ibid.

He was reported to have succeeded his father in teaching the Qur'ānic sciences and that he had also taught fiqh - al-mīrāth (law of inheritance) at the khalwas of al-Qoz.⁽¹⁾

On his death, his teaching post at the khalwa was said to have been taken by his brother al-faqīh Madani b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, who was said to have taught ahkām al-Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

Thus, this arrangement of teaching at two stages, or running two khalwas, one for teaching the Qur'ān at the elementary level, and the other for teaching the Qur'ānic sciences at an advanced level, seems to have continued through the Funj period.

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The above examples of, and references to the main khalwas of the period seem to illustrate that the geographical spread of the khalwas of that era was mainly restricted to the riverain region, i.e., along the main Nile south of Dongola and across northern Gezira region. In support of this Hillelson states that it was along the main Nile between Dongola and Khartoum and along the Blue Nile up to Sennar, and along the eastern bank of the White Nile and across the northern Gezira plains where the dwelling places and seats of learning of the holymen cluster most thickly.⁽³⁾ Today, the qubbas (shrines) of these saints are to be found chiefly along the Nile north of Khartoum and along the Blue Nile up to Sennar.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.359.

2. Ibid.

3. Hillelson, SNR, p.192.

4. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.142.

PART II

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE KHALWA
UP TO THE PRESENT TIME

CHAPTER ONE

THE TURCO-EGYPTIAN PERIOD

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule in the Sudan the country was, for the first time, united and provided with a centralized government that was regarded as part of Egypt.⁽¹⁾ Internally the country came to be ruled by an enforced state's system of law and order,⁽²⁾ and externally through its contact with Egypt was said to have been exposed to the impact of modern civilization.⁽³⁾

However, despite the good intentions of the successive rulers of Egypt towards the Sudan,⁽⁴⁾ the Turco-Egyptian period in the Sudan came to be regarded as the worst type of occupation, injustice, tyranny and corruption.⁽⁵⁾

It should be noted, in the first place, that the main objective of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha behind the occupation of the Sudan was to exploit its human and mineral resources.⁽⁶⁾ That was reported to have been exemplified in his effort to build up a slave-army, trained in the European manner and personally loyal to him, and to exploit the fabled gold mines of Sennar region.⁽⁷⁾

1. Shibayka, pp.229, 141-2.

2. Ibid., pp.132-3.

3. Ibid., p.229.

4. Ibid.

5. Al-Bāqir, "Religious Education", p.81; Shibayka, p.230.

6. Shuqayr, vol.II, p.1; Shibayka, pp.84, 109.

7. Holt and Daly, pp.47-8.

In actuality, in addition to the forceful invasion and subjugation of the people of the Sudan to the yoke of occupation, the regime imposed a system of extraordinary onerous taxation and employed harsh and inhumane methods in the collection of such taxation.⁽¹⁾

All this was said to have precipitated an attitude of resentment that culminated in the murder of Ismā'īl Pasha, son of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha, by the Ja'aliyyīn chiefs at Shendi and led to the general revolt that was said to have flared among the Sudanese of the riverain region from Shendi up to Wad Medani, the capital then.⁽²⁾

In retaliation to the murder of Ismā'īl Pasha and in an attempt to stamp out the armed resistance, Muḥammad Bey al-Defterdar - Muḥammad 'Alī's son-in-law - who was invading the province of Kordofan at the time, launched a series of brutal punitive raids over all the riverain region, destroying almost everything on his way, as could be illustrated below.

Such events seem to have had far-reaching repercussions on all walks of life - and in particular on the khalwa which under the Funj period came to occupy a central position in the spiritual and social life of the Sudanese communities.⁽³⁾

1. See "Financial Aspect of khalwa Education", below.

2. MacMichael, vol.II, pp.388-392; Holt and Daly, p.55.

3. The reference is the khalwa centre of the Funj period surveyed above, and to the Teachers' status, below.

The devastated areas were the very districts where the main khalwa centres of the Funj period dominated the scene. The Shayqiyya region, Berber district, al-Ghubush, al-Damer, al-Halfāya, Tuti island, al-‘Aylafūn, Abū Ḥarāz, Wad Medani, the villages along the White Nile and the Gezira region, and other places.⁽¹⁾

The atrocities of the Turco-Egyptian invasion and the punitive campaigns of al-Defterdar which seem to have hit hard the khalwas and their teachers - who were regarded as the true leaders by their communities - could be further illustrated by citing the following examples.

At al-Damer, Muḥammad al-Defterdar was said to have ordered that the khalwas and mosques of al-Majādhīb be destroyed and their Shaykhs who were leading the resistance massacred.⁽²⁾ Among those killed was said to have been al-Shaykh Qamar al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Majdhūb.⁽³⁾

At al-Matemma, the seat of al-Makk al-Masā‘ad of al-Ja‘aliyyīn, al-Defterdar was reported to have given instructions that the khalwa of al-fakī Aḥmad al-Rayyah, and all those therein, be burnt.⁽⁴⁾

1. MacMichael, vol.II, pp.388-392.

2. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, 15th November, 1981.

3. Ibid.

4. MacMichael, vol.II, p.389.

Then, having destroyed Shendi - the seat of al-Makk Nimr of al-Ja'aliyyīn - al-Defterdar was said to have marched on al-Ḥalfāya (the seat of the 'Abdallābi Shaykhs, and the centre of the famous khalwas of the Dayfallāh's family),⁽¹⁾ found it deserted and so he burnt it down.⁽²⁾

On the White Nile, at the village of al-Ja'aliyyīn, when the forces of al-Defterdar could not get hold of the fleeing al-fakī Fadlallāh, the hands of seventy of his followers were said to have been cut off.⁽³⁾

After his victory over al-Makk Nimr at the battle of al-Nuṣūb, al-Defterdar was said to have seized al-fakī Ibrāhīm 'Īsa and Walad Duqays, beat them, and taken them prisoners.⁽⁴⁾

At Muqdūr, where a battle was said to have taken place in 1239/1823, between the forces of al-Defterdar and al-Makk al-Masā'ad, al-Shaykh Ṣāliḥ, one of the descendants of Bān al-Naqa, was reported to have been slain and the books of al-Shaykh Hasan [Ṣāliḥ] were scattered and lost.⁽⁵⁾

The successor of al-Defterdar seems to have been even more brutal to the men of religion. On his arrival at Khartoum

1. See Methods of Teaching, below, for reference to this khalwa centre.
2. MacMichael, vol.II, p.389.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp.390-91.

‘Uthmān Bey al-Burqūnī was said to have ordered that al-fakī Arbāb b. al-Kāmil and al-Shaykh ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar be blown from a cannon.⁽¹⁾

In reference to the murder of Ismā‘īl Pasha, the armed resistance of the tribal chiefs and the havoc that took place as a result of al-Defterdar's campaigns, Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Dāfi’ - a contemporary Sudanese historian - was reported to have given the following description.⁽²⁾

"This act was the cause of devastation of the land, the death of the true believers [religious men] the shedding of their blood, the plunder of their goods, the dishonouring of their wives, the general ruin of the countryside, the captivity of the women and children and the dispersal of the people into other districts."⁽³⁾

To make things worse, all this was said to have happened at a time when the country was swept by a severe drought and an epidemic of smallpox.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, as a result of all these calamities, half the population was said to have perished by the sword, sickness and famine.⁽⁵⁾

1. MacMichael, vol.II, p.391.

2. Ibid., pp.355, 392.

3. Ibid., p.392.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

It was largely due to such atrocities, and in order to evade the imposed heavy taxes and the harsh treatment that large numbers of the terrified inhabitants and religious leaders - the khalwa teachers - were forced to abandon their original homes, on the riverain lands, and flee for safety into the remote areas - to the Ethiopian borders, to Kordufan and Darfur - out of reach or away from the government's eye.⁽¹⁾

However, thanks to this forceful dispersion of the riverain people into the remote countryside, a new generation of khalwas was established in the new settlement areas. A considerable contribution in this respect seems to have been accomplished by the migrant members of al-Majādhīb family of teachers. Like many of their kinsmen, the Ja'aliyyīn - who were said to have carried out the murder of Ismā'īl Pasha that triggered the devastating punitive retaliatory measures against them and against all their supporters of the riverain people - were said to have dispersed all over Eastern Sudan, between the Nile and the Ethiopian borders, and to have established khalwas for the education of their children and followers, wherever they settled.⁽²⁾

As examples of these, reference could be made to the khalwas

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1. MacMichael, vol.II, pp.392, 394, 395; 'Abd al-Majid, vol.II, p.11; Shibayka, p.132; see also "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.
 2. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, of al-Majādhīb family, at al-Damer, 15th November, 1981.

established by the following members of al-Majādhīb:

al-fakī Muḥammad al-Azraq at al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq (al-Gadaref);

al-fakī al-Makkī al-Azraq at al-Ṣūfī al-Makkī;

al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Majdhūb b. Qamar al-Dīn at Suākin;

al-fakī ‘Abdallāh al-Naqar at Berber and Kasala;

al-fakī ‘Abdallāh b. Medani at Tokar and Erkawīt.

In addition to these were the khalwas established by their students.

On the other hand, when the period of turmoil and general unrest seems to have subsided in the riverain region, normal life gradually appears to have been restored. The Turco-Egyptian administration was said to have reassured the people and encouraged them to return to their home districts, cultivate their lands, re-build their villages and resume their traditional education at their khalwas.⁽¹⁾

As a result, a number of the old khalwa centres that were flourishing during the Funj era seem to have been rehabilitated and study resumed as before.

As examples of such khalwa centres reference could be made

1. The reference is made here in particular to the periods of the rulers in the Sudan: Māhī` Bey (1241/1826) and Kūrshīd (1241/1826-1254/1838), (MacMichael, vol.II, pp.392-5).

to those of the riverain region such as al-Ghubush,⁽¹⁾ al-Majādhīb⁽²⁾ and Kutranj. New khalwas also emerged in the same region - such as those of Kadabas,⁽³⁾ Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Ban,⁽⁴⁾ and Tayba Qurashi.

Similarly, in Western Sudan (especially in the province of Kordufan) a substantial number of khalwas of study seems to have emerged during the Turco-Egyptian period in the Sudan.

Many of the khalwa teachers seem to have migrated, with many of their terrified people, from the riverain lands as a result of the atrocities of the Defterdar there, to this relatively quiet and secure region.

However, of the main khalwas that seem to have flourished, the following have been mentioned:⁽⁵⁾

- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh Ahmed Buwayḍa al-Bura'ī at al-Milayḥa near Bara.
- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh 'Abdallāh Abbaro at al-Milayḥa also.
- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh Badawi Abu Ṣafīyyah, near al-Obeid.
- The masjid-khalwa of Walad Suwār al-Dhahab near al-Obeid.
- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh al-Qādī 'Arabī near al-Obeid.

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1. See the khalwa centre of al-Ghubush, below.
 2. See the khalwa centre of al-Majādhīb at al-Damer, below.
 3. See the khalwa centre of al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ja'alī at Kadabas, below.
 4. See the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Ban, below.
 5. Maḥmūd, 'Abd al-Qādir, al-Tawā'if al-Sūfiyya fī al-Sūdān, Khartoum (1971), p.10. All these khalwas flourished in Kordufan Province, Western Sudan - especially around its capital al-Obeid.

- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh Muḥammad Dolīb, at Khurs, near al-Obeid.
- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh Muḥammad 'Uthmān Farah, near al-Obeid.
- The masjid-khalwa of al-faqīh Ahmad al-Azhari at al-Obeid.

As far as the general pattern, internal organization and the functioning of the khalwa was concerned, no significant development during the Turco-Egyptian period seems to have taken place.

In reference to this issue al-Bāqir states that,

"the period of the Egyptian rule 1821-1885 was not of an outstanding educational happening....One merit was the tendency towards aiding [financially] schools (khalwas). However, when one looks into the essence of the educational development, we find no signs of improvement. The learning system retained its traditional form in its policy, aims, means, teachers, syllabuses and methods."⁽¹⁾

In support of the above, 'Abdīn writes: "As for religious education during this period it remained unchanged, in terms of places, means, methods and principles."⁽²⁾

1. Al-Bāqir, "Religious Education", p.81.

2. 'Abdīn, p.120.

In further confirmation of such a state of affairs and in reference to the reigns of the successive rulers of Egypt, 'Abd al-Majīd writes: "We observe that Muḥammad 'Alī did not set an organized and detailed policy for education in the Sudan - as he had done so for Egypt."⁽¹⁾

The justification for such a stand was that "he preferred not to change the state of the traditional Arabic and Islamic education in the Sudan but rather to lend it an encouraging and a helping hand whenever need arose."⁽²⁾

During the reign of 'Abbās I (1848-1854) "there is no evidence of decline in the state of religious education."⁽³⁾

However, for the first time, the state was reported to have established a modern three year kuttāb in Khartoum under Rifā'a al-Taḥṭāwī, which continued for only nine months (1269/1853 - 1270/1854) and then was closed down by 'Abbās's successor Saīd

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.18.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.23.

Pasha.⁽¹⁾

Sa'īd Pasha (1270/1854 - 1279/1863) was said to have continued encouraging the private religious education (the khalwa's) in the Sudan.⁽²⁾

During the reign of Isma'īl Pasha (1279/1863 - 1296/1879), religious education at the khalwas was said to have reached the peak of encouragement of the Turco-Egyptian period.⁽³⁾ At the beginning of his reign Khadive Isma'īl exempted the cultivation lands of the khalwa teachers from taxation and granted them salaries, but at the end of his reign the financial grants were almost cut off.⁽⁴⁾

However, the khalwa education was said to have continued on the same traditional lines.⁽⁵⁾

On the other hand a parallel State's system of modern kuttāb seems to have been instituted. During the reign of Ismā'īl Pasha and the governorship of Mūsā Pasha Ḥamdī (in the Sudan) five kuttāb schools were established at Khartoum, with a capacity of

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1. The main motive of 'Abbās I behind the establishment of that school was to send al-Taḥṭāwī into exile ('Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.29; 'Abdīn, p.120).
 2. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.45.
 3. Ibid., p.71.
 4. See "Financial Aspect of khalwa Education", below.
 5. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.95.

two hundred children, and at Berber, Dongola, in Kordufan and al-Taka - with a capacity of seventy pupils each.⁽¹⁾

It was observed also that, owing to the closer contacts between Egypt and the Sudan, the number of Sudanese students studying at al-Azhar was steadily increasing, as could be evidenced by the erection of a special riwāq (hostel) for the Sinnāri students and another for Darfur students at al-Azhar, by the Egyptian Government.⁽²⁾

Aside from these developments, almost the same pattern of traditional khalwa education of the Funj period seems to have been continued during the Turco-Egyptian regime.

Hence, according to 'Abd al-Majīd, it could be assumed that almost the same pattern, type and practices of the mosque and khalwa education that were prevalent during the Funj era (16th - 18th centuries) were perpetuated under the Turco-Egyptian rule.⁽³⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, pp.73-4.

2. Ibid., p.19; see also "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.18.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAHDIYYA PERIOD

Before discussing the developments of khalwa education during this period, it seems relevant to shed light on the personality and background of the man whose name became the symbol of this period.

Muḥammad Ahmed (al-Mahdī) b. ‘Abdallāh was said to have been born at Dirar Island (Dongola District) in 1258/1843.⁽¹⁾ He was known to have been a descendant of a pious man, called Ḥājj Sharīf.

When life became difficult in Dongola district, Muḥammad Ahmed, as a child, moved with the family to Khartoum district.⁽²⁾ There, his father and elder brothers were said to have engaged in the family's trade - boat building - while he joined a khalwa for learning the Qur’ān, at Karari and then another one at Khartoum.⁽³⁾

Being by nature inclined towards religion and religious education, Muḥammad was reported to have then engaged in the study of ‘ilm (fiqh) at the mosque-khalwa of Kutranj at the hands of al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Ṣuwaylih.⁽⁴⁾ Then he was said to have joined the khalwa of al-Ghubush where he studied

1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.114.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.115.

grammar, tawhīd, fiqh and Sufism, at the hands of the outstanding faqīh, Muḥammad al-Khayr.⁽¹⁾

It is worth mentioning that while studying at the khalwa of al-Ghubush, Muḥammad Aḥmad was said to have acquired a reputation for religious devotion and piety.⁽²⁾ An example of his piety was reported to have been his refraining from eating from his master's food, like other students, because of his teacher's dependence, for living, on an unlawful source of income - an indication to the salary his shaykh - Muḥammad al-Khayr - was said to have been receiving from the Turco-Egyptian government, which to Muḥammad Aḥmad (al-Mahdī) was an embodiment of injustice.⁽³⁾ Hence, he was reported to have lived on fish which he caught in the Nile.⁽⁴⁾

After the successful completion of his academic khalwa studies he was reported to have felt an inclination towards mysticism, and to satisfy this urge he was said to have joined the Ṣūfī ḥalqa of the Sammāniyya tarīqa of al-Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf Nūr al-Dāyīm, grandson of the founder of this tarīqa in the Sudan, al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ṭayyīb b. al-Bashīr, in 1277/1861.⁽⁵⁾

1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.115.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Shibayka, p.233.

5. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.115.

At the khalwa of his Ṣūfī Shaykh at Umm Marriḥ⁽¹⁾, Muḥammad Aḥmad was said to have excelled his colleagues in demonstration of piety, asceticism and absolute obedience to his master.⁽²⁾ As a result, after seven years devoted to Ṣūfī practices and personal service to his Shaykh, Muḥammad Aḥmad was said to have been installed by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf Nūr al-Dāyim as a Ṣūfī Shaykh authorized to initiate others in the Ṣūfī Path.⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad then returned to his family near Khartoum, got married and embarked on teaching and instructing disciples according to the Sammāniyya tarīqa.⁽⁴⁾

In 1286/1871 he was said to have moved with his brothers and families to Aba Island, where conditions were said to have been ideal for boat building.⁽⁵⁾ On his part, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad was reported to have established a mosque and a khalwa where he taught the Qur'ān and ‘ilm to the children of the island, and at the same time initiated the growing number of his followers in the Ṣūfī Path.⁽⁶⁾

Meanwhile, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad was reported to have been maintaining a good and loyal disciple-Shaykh relationship with

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1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.115.
 2. Ibid.; Shibayka, pp.233-4.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.,
 6. Ibid.

his Sūfi master, as exemplified in his visitations to his Shaykh on religious occasions.⁽¹⁾

However, for one reason or other, relations between al-Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad and his master were said to have deteriorated to the extent that he was expelled from the Sammāniyya tariqa.⁽²⁾

At any rate, in view of that grave situation Muḥammad Aḥmad was reported to have begged his Shaykh for forgiveness but failed to win his pardon.⁽³⁾

However, in view of his deep devotion and conviction regarding the Sammāniyya tariqa, it seems, he was reported to have contacted another highly regarded Shaykh of the tariqa - al-Shaykh al-Qurashī b. al-Zayn of al-Ḥalāwīn region - who was said to have reinstated him as a recognized Shaykh of the Sammāniyya.⁽⁴⁾

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad was reported, then, to have announced that he had abandoned his ex-master, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Sharīf, for his violation of al-Sharī'a Law.⁽⁵⁾

However, at the Island of Aba al-Shaykh Muḥammad Aḥmad was

1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.116.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.119; Shibayka, pp.235-6.

5. Ibid., p.118.

said to have resumed teaching of the Qur'ān and 'ilm and at the same time instructing his followers in the Sūfī Path, from his khalwa and cave.⁽¹⁾ In addition, his reputation as a religious Shaykh of holiness and supernatural powers was reported to have been steadily increasing among the surrounding tribes.⁽²⁾

Furthermore, al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ahmad, accompanied by his disciples - in their patched garments - was said to have made a number of tours to the different parts of the country, from Dongola to Sennar and to Kordofan in Western Sudan.⁽³⁾ It was from such tours and visits to the Sūfī Shaykhs that he was reported to have gathered first-hand information on the general discontent of the people in respect to the misgovernment and corruption of the Turco-Egyptian administration. Not only that, but he seems to have sensed that both the Sūfī Shaykhs and their followers of the masses were looking forward to salvation.⁽⁴⁾

At any rate, on 1st of Sha' bān 1298/29th June 1881, he was reported to have dispatched secret messages to his adherents of notables - especially the Sūfī Shaykhs, confiding to them that he was informed by the Prophet (in a vision) that he had been chosen as al-Mahdī al-Muntazar (the Expected Mahdī), the divine leader, who would fill the earth with equity and justice even as it had been filled with corruption and injustice.⁽⁵⁾

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1. He carved a cave for living and Sūfī meditations (Shuqayr, p.119)
 2. Holt and Daly, p.86.
 3. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.119.
 4. Ibid.; Shibayka, p.236.
 5. Shuqayr, vol.III, pp.121-6; Holt and Daly, p.86.

As could be realized from the foregoing, his khalwa education and his involvement in the Sūfī Path had had a formative influence on the man in addition to his own personal convictions and character. Hence, the main sources of his teachings were attributed to his strong charismatic personality, his deep Sūfī involvement and his wide knowledge of the science of Shari'a.⁽¹⁾ He was also said to have been influenced by the teachings and the movement of al-Sanūsī in Libya and through the latter by the movement of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb in Arabia.⁽²⁾

At any rate the essence of his Mahdīyya call was the revival of Islam - a return to the original Orthodox Islam. Such a great task would be only fulfilled by al-Mahdī who would fill the earth with justice and equity even as it had been filled with oppression and wrong.⁽³⁾

1. 'Abdīn, pp.130-33.

2. Ibid., pp.134-135; Shibayka, pp.345-6.

3. Shibayka, p.352; Shuqayr, vol.II, p.364.

To achieve such a supreme aim in the Sudan, al-Mahdī was said to have directed his efforts to (a) transform the different sections, sects and tribes of the Sudan into one big religious society, and (b) to bind it together by the creation of close ties of nationalism⁽¹⁾ - to promote a distinct Sudanese character.

It should be noted that during the Funj era the different Sūfī Shaykhs succeeded in creating autonomous communities of followers - each centred round a certain Shaykh. There was no central spiritual authority to embrace all these different sects of followers.⁽²⁾

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule although the whole country was geographically united under a central government, yet the sectarian and Sūfī factions seem to have multiplied and led to further divisions of the people.⁽³⁾

Hence the significance of the objective of al-Mahdī to transform the heterogenous sections of the people of the Sudan, through religion, into one cohesive Muslim society. From his tours and visitations to the different Sūfī Shaykhs across the country he seems to have come to the realization that the main weaknesses of Islam in practice, in the Sudan, were exemplified

1. 'Ābdīn, p.124.

2. See Part One, Chapter Two.

3. Shibayka, p.346.

in the following.

The overwhelming dominance of the rival Ṣūfī Shaykhs and their tarīqas over the masses, to the extent that each head of Ṣūfī tarīqa seems to have been establishing a new religion, and to have regarded his rivals as going astray.⁽¹⁾

The differences of the four main Sunnite Madhhabs seem to have aggravated the problem of division amongst the Muslims in the Sudan and created a barrier between them and the main sources of Islam - the Qur'ān and traditions of the Prophet.⁽²⁾

Further, the circulation of a multitude of diverse and conflicting religious books, commentaries, dealing with trivial and superficial problems, seems to have confused the ordinary Muslim in the Sudan instead of helping him understand Islam.⁽³⁾

In short, all these, according to al-Mahdī, seem to have concealed the light of religion from the Muslims in the country.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, his message as the awaited Mahdī and in order to correct the situation referred to above, al-Mahdī was reported to have emphatically advocated a return to pure, orthodox and simple Islam as derived from its two main sources: the Qur'ān and Sunna.⁽⁵⁾ So he called for strict practical commitment to Islam in

1. Shibayka, p.346.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.347.

5. Ibid., p.346.

accordance with the laws of Sharī'a to be enforced by jihād.⁽¹⁾

To carry out his objectives in practice, al-Mahdī was said to have taken the following measures (which had direct bearing on khalwa education).

a) He ordered that all books in circulation be burnt, with the exception of a few source books - besides the Qur'ān, the two standard books of Ḥadīth of Muslim and al-Bukhārī - known as al-Sahihayn, Tafsīr al-Baydāwī of Ghazālī's, Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, al-Sha'arānī's books and al-Sīra al-Ḥalabīyya.⁽²⁾

b) He strictly banned all the Sūfī tarīqas and prohibited allegiances to their Shaykhs.⁽³⁾

c) Not only that but he was said to have even suspended the four Orthodox Sunnite Madhhabs.⁽⁴⁾ Accordingly he was said to have embarked on working out a Madhhab of his own in which he tried to assemble the points of agreement amongst the four Madhhabs and to reconcile the points of difference - in an attempt to unify them in one.⁽⁵⁾

On the other hand he was reported to have stated that the

1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.364.

2. Ibid.; Shibayka, p.349.

3. Shibayka, pp.346-9.

4. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.364; Shibayka, p.348.

5. Ibid.

path leading to Allāh was exemplified in carrying out the following:⁽¹⁾

- a) Jamā'a (group) prayer.
- b) Participation in Jihād (Holy War) for God's sake.
- c) Strict compliance with the laws of Shari'a.
- d) Constant remembrance and repetition of the word of "Tawhīd."
- e) Recitation of the Qur'ān.
- f) Recitation of al-Mahdī's prayer book (Rātib al-Mahdī).

As far as the practical application of his teachings was concerned, al-Mahdī was reported to have directed his followers to follow his example when performing the various religious rituals - such as ablution, prayer, recitation of the Qur'ān, etc.⁽²⁾

On the other hand al-Mahdī was said to have applied the Shari'a law - especially the hudūd against non-observance of the Islamic teachings.⁽³⁾

In reference to the undesirable practices of some of the khalwa teachers, al-Mahdī was reported to have strongly denounced and prohibited the practice of writing amulets, practising

1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.365.

2. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.364; Shibayka, pp.350-3.

3. Ibid.

'Azīma or magic.⁽¹⁾

Hence, as a result of his educational policy the khalwa's content of education was greatly affected.

It is worth noting that at the breakout of the Mahdiyya revolution most of the religious men, who seem to have had influence over the masses, were said to have been the Ṣūfī Shaykhs or the khalwa teachers.⁽²⁾

Thus, in response to his contacts, and when they learnt of the appearance of the expected Mahdī these Ṣūfī Shaykhs were said to have been overwhelmed by pride for the fact that al-Mahdī had emerged from amongst their ranks.⁽³⁾ Hence, they were reported to have readily responded to his call, rose up to his support and led their followers in a war of Jihād against the corrupt Turco-Egyptian administration. As an example of those who participated in or led incursions of Jihād during the Mahdiyya revolution the following Ṣūfī Shaykhs could be mentioned:⁽⁴⁾

- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Tayyib al-Baṣīr of al-Ḥalāwīn (Gezira region).
- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-'Ubayd b. Badr of Um Dawwan Ban, Khartoum region.⁽⁵⁾

1. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.365; Shibayka, p.353.

2. Shibayka, p.252.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp.141-237.

5. See the khalwa of Dawwan Ban, below..

- al-Shaykh 'Āmir al-Mukāshfī (Gezira region).
- al-Sharif Aḥmad b. Ṭāhā (eastern bank of the Blue Nile, between Rufa'a and Abū Ḥarāz).
- al-faqīh Fadlallāh b. Kirrīf (UmmSunayṭa, Southern Gezira).
- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr, al-Mahdī's teacher at al-Ghubush (Berber district).
- al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ja'alī of Kadabas (Berber district).⁽¹⁾
- al-Majādhīb Shaykhs of al-Damer.⁽²⁾
- al-Shaykh al-Ṭāhir al-Majdhūb, in Eastern Sudan, who actively supported 'Uthmān Dīqna.⁽³⁾

On the other hand, the class of 'ulamā', which was said to have been very small, influenced by the government it seems, was said to have rigorously rejected al-Mahdī's claim and supported the administration in its efforts to stamp down the revolution. Of such 'ulamā' the following were mentioned:

- al-Shaykh Shākir al-Ghazzī - the Muftī of the Sudan, al-Shaykh al-Amin al-Darīr - chief justice and al-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Azharī, chief justice for Western Sudan.⁽⁴⁾

However, the more important issue facing al-Mahdī was to lead his followers to the promised victory over the Turco-

1. See the khalwa of Kadabas, below.

2. See the khalwa of al-Majādhīb of al-Damer, below.

3. Ibid.

4. Shuqayr, vol.III, pp.375-391.

Egyptian regime which he accomplished.

Nevertheless, despite al-Mahdī's - and indeed the whole country's - preoccupation with the war of Jihād, the question of education does not seem to have been neglected. Al-Mahdī was reported to have strongly urged his followers, wives and children to embark on reading the Qur'ān,⁽¹⁾ and performing their religious duties.

However, during the years of the revolution, as could be expected, the top priority was given to Jihād, and not to education, as could be inferred from al-Mahdī's instructions to the khalwa's teachers.⁽²⁾ Accordingly, khalwa education, in the affected areas, seems to have been suspended by teachers who rose in support of al-Mahdī.

Further, since al-Mahdī's teachings were against the educational practices and institutions of the Turco-Egyptian administration, the handful of primary schools established at the provincial headquarters, as well as the missionary schools, all were said to have been closed down.⁽³⁾

On the other hand, it could be assumed that al-Mahdī's premature death shortly after the success of the revolution in

1. Shuqayr, p.349.

2. See his letters to al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd b. Badr and the latter's ex-student Dafallāh (Shuqayr, vol.III, pp.217-9).

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, pp.94-5.

1885 does not seem to have allowed him time to witness the envisaged changes in the khalwa traditional pattern of education. This task of the universal application of his teachings took place under al-Khalīfa's reign.

During the reign of al-Khalīfa 'Abdallāhī, al-Mahdī's successor (1885-1898), priority seems to have been given to consolidation of his rule. His primary problem was said to have been the restoration of law and order over a vast area torn by internal revolts and conflicts, the establishment of effective administration, and defending the country against external threats.⁽¹⁾ As a result, the military character of the revolutionary period was said to have been sustained and, consequently, no genuine resettlement of the country seems to have been maintained.⁽²⁾

However, despite al-Khalīfa's deep preoccupation with such a serious problem (the consolidation of his power) he was reported to have given education, especially in the capital, great attention and encouragement.⁽³⁾

The capital, Omdurman, in his time, was said to have been transformed from a small village at the breakout of the Mahdiyya revolution into a huge town holding a population of 400,000

1. Holt and Daly, p.112.

2. Ibid.

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.103.

persons and an army of 50,000.⁽¹⁾ Here, in Omdurman, he was said to have gathered almost all the 'ulamā and instructed them to embark on teaching his followers - al-faqīh Ḥusain al-Zahra, for example, was said to have been in charge of teaching the law of inheritance at the Khalīfa's huge mosque.⁽²⁾

Not only that but the Khalīfa was said to have embarked on a policy of making education compulsory amongst his followers. For two years the people were said to have been instructed to engage in learning the Qur'ān and how to read and write. He was reported to have ordered each Amīr (group leader) to be in charge of gathering his men, after the maghrib (sunset) prayer, in a ḥalqa at the mosque where they embarked on learning and reading the Qur'ān, from the beginning, from their lawḥs, by the light of wood fire.⁽³⁾

To accomplish such an educational effort he was said to have ordered, on one occasion, the making of 4,500 lawḥs.⁽⁴⁾

As a result of his concern for the spread of education, the number of khalwas of study, in Omdurman alone, was reported to have exceeded 800 during his period.⁽⁵⁾

1. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.92.

2. Ibid., vol.III, p.563.

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.102.

4. Bashīr, p.21.

5. Ibid.

Not only that but the teachers were said to have been paid from the government's purse.⁽¹⁾

In the light of the above favourable attitude, it could be assumed that the same trend could have been extended to the countryside. However, the unsettled life in these areas throughout the years of the revolution and al-Khalīfa's rule seems to have had negative effect on the continuation of khalwa education. Many khalwas seem to have been dislocated or their education disrupted.

Of the main changes that took place at the khalwa was the change in the content of education - the diversified courses of study and the Ṣūfī rituals were abandoned and the khalwa seems to have complied with the prescribed content of education devised by al-Mahdī, including his prayers.⁽²⁾

Hence, under the Mahdiyya rule the khalwa content of education became narrower and was restricted, it seems, to the teaching of the Qur'ān, elements of al-Sunna and al-Mahdī's prayers.⁽³⁾

The khalwa teachers seem to have become accountable to the state - al-Khalīfa's agents.

1. Bashīr, p.21.

2. See al-Mahdī's teachings, above.

3. See Content of Education , below.

However, aside from the above mentioned developments, the traditional khalwa pattern and practices which had existed before the Mahdiyya - as regards such areas as structure, administration, teachers' preparation, methods of teaching, students' life, their upkeep and discipline - for example, seem to have been preserved unchanged.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PERIOD OF THE CONDOMINIUM

The reconquest of the Sudan by the Anglo-Egyptian forces in 1898 put an end to the Mahdiyya rule (1885-1898) and started a new era in the country's history. Although the campaign for the reconquest was said to have been carried out in the name of the Khedive of Egypt, on the ground that the Sudan was considered (during the Mahdiyya period) as a province that had been lost to Egypt through rebellion,⁽¹⁾ yet Britain, the senior partner, for a number of reasons,⁽²⁾ main among which was to serve her own vital interests, (while claiming to safeguard Egypt's historical rights and interests) argued that "by the right of conquest"⁽³⁾ she was entitled to share in ruling the country conquered by their combined forces.⁽⁴⁾

Lord Cromer, Britain's agent and consul general in Egypt,⁽⁵⁾ was said to have devised a hybrid form of government, according to which the Sudan was governed jointly by both Britain and Egypt⁽⁶⁾ - a Condominium rule - during the period 1898-1955.

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1. Holt and Daly, pp.117-118.
 2. Ibid., p.117.
 3. Cromer, Modern Egypt, p.116.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Holt and Daly, p.117.
 6. Cromer, op. cit., p.115.

The new rule in the Sudan seems to have had a great impact on khalwa education with which we are here concerned.

It seems, in this respect, that the attitudes and policies of the authorities in the Sudan towards religious education were almost a reflection of those of Lord Cromer (the architect of the Condominium Agreement) in Egypt. For example, in reference to mosque schools he was reported to have stated that "although it would be an exaggeration to say that they were absolutely useless...organized as they were, however, they were as nearly as useless as any educational establishment could be."⁽¹⁾

In the Sudan similar ideas seem to have been held by Wingate - the Governor General (1899-1917)⁽²⁾ and Currie - the first Director of Education (1900-1933),⁽³⁾ as could be substantiated below.

The first survey on khalwa education, carried out by the provincial governors under the new regime, was said to have revealed the existence of hundreds of khalwas all over the country⁽⁴⁾ and the government's attitude towards them seems to have been unsympathetic and unfavourable. In reference to the educational conditions of such khalwas, Wingate states that:

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1. Cromer, op. cit., p.533.
 2. Holt and Daly, pp.118-9.
 3. Currie, p.2.
 4. Bashīr, p.30.

"Village children were taught a little reading, less writing and the repetition of the Qur'ān and the Mahdī's prayers by teachers who were ignorant of the very rudiments of the art of instruction, utterly incompetent, illiterate to a degree and consumed by a spirit of the wildest fanaticism...buildings mere hovels, children huddled together under the most insanitary conditions and instruction carried on in the midst of a deafening babel."⁽¹⁾

A later government's report seems to have echoed the above stated unsympathetic criticism of the educational situation at the beginning of the Condominium period:

"All that had existed at the time of the reconquest was a number of native Qur'ān schools which were run on the narrowest of curricula and in deplorable conditions."⁽²⁾

Mr. James Currie, on his part - as the first principal to the envisaged Gordon's College and Director of Education in the Sudan - seems to have taken the practical steps to undermine the position of the khalwas.

1. Bashīr, p.30, quoting: Wingate, The Story of Gordon College, p.572.

2. Sudan Government, The Sudan, A Record of Progress (1898-1947), p.20.

After an interlude of eighteen months touring all over the country to observe conditions for himself he (Mr. Currie) set out, in 1900, the following objectives for education in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan:⁽¹⁾

- a) The creation of a competent artisan class (which was lacking at the time).
- b) The diffusion, among the masses of the people, of education sufficient to enable them to understand the machinery of Government, particularly with respect to the equitable and impartial administration of justice.
- c) The creation of a small administrative class, capable of filling many Government posts, some of administrative, others of a technical nature.

However, instead of reforming the traditional khalwas to achieve these objectives the underlying policy according to Mr. Currie was the establishment of as many vernacular (kuttāb) schools as the funds permitted, the provision of a training college for schoolmasters, and a school of law for qādīs - the judges in the Sharī'a courts.⁽²⁾

Thus, from the beginning of its rule, the Condominium

1. Currie, p.4.

2. Currie, pp.4-5.

Government seems to have made its plan to discard the khalwas or even to replace them by a modern school system.

Nevertheless, the accomplishment of these goals was said to have been hampered by serious constraints - exemplified in the limited financial allocations and the unfavourable attitude of parents in the countryside to the whole idea of school education.⁽¹⁾ The parents feared that such a school might take their children away, make them irreligious and teach them bad manners.⁽²⁾

However, underlying the whole question of traditional education, at the time, was the more serious problem of law and security with which the new regime seems to have been preoccupied. This was evidenced by the fact that "for the first twenty years of the Condominium rule, the top priority was given to the maintenance of law and order in the country".⁽³⁾ Accordingly, religious policy came to be largely determined by considerations of political security.⁽⁴⁾

1. The Sudan: A Record of Progress, p.18.

2. Unfortunately, eventually, almost all of these fears seem to have come true. In reference to the serious question of irreligiousness, for example, Griffiths states that "whereas religion maintained its prestige amongst...those who have not joined the modern school,...it was losing ground amongst the educated, partly because of the influx of western ideas...." (Griffiths, pp.145-6).

3. Griffiths, p.5.

4. Holt and Daly, p.124.

Hence, Mahdism was suppressed and the Sūfī Orders were said to have been denied official recognition and looked upon with suspicion, during that period.⁽¹⁾

Likewise, the resumption of traditional khalwa education under the Sūfī Shaykhs (who had been the relentless supporters of the Mahdiyya revolution) would seem to have raised fears of reviving fanaticism. In effect, the new regime seems to have viewed the traditional khalwas with mistrust.

Nevertheless, despite all these drawbacks, to close down the khalwas - and at that early stage - seems to have been conceived as iconoclastic, for they were the only form of public instruction in existence then.⁽²⁾

Thus, faced with the need for education at the basic level, and being hampered by the constraints referred to above to establish alternative institutions, the new administration had to retain the traditional khalwas for the time being.

Accordingly, the educational authorities seem to have come to the realization that, despite their reservations against them, the khalwas could be used as vital feeders to the newly established Gordon College - supplying the badly needed candidates for the different sections of the College: the teachers', the Sharī'a,

1. Holt and Daly, p.124.

2. The Sudan: A Record of Progress, p.20.

qādīs and the industrial section at Omdurman.⁽¹⁾

Hence, out of necessity, the traditional khalwa seems to have been tolerated and utilized as a substitute to the Government's kuttāb school.

However, in order to make it more efficient in providing its temporary services, and more important to contain any probable dangers that it might engender - such as the stimulation of fanaticism which the similar kuttāb institution in Egypt was accused of - the khalwa, like that institution had to modify its curriculum.⁽²⁾

The envisaged khalwa reform as set by Currie was exemplified in:⁽³⁾

- a) Creating a model kuttāb parallel to the khalwa.
- b) Giving grants-in-aid to selected khalwas and encouraging their fakīs to introduce elementary secular subjects - such as arithmetic in their curricula.

1. Bashīr, p.40.

2. In Egypt, Cromer was reported to have accused the kuttāb school as being loaded with danger: "Being necessarily based, to a great extent on the teaching of the Qur'ān [it] must rather stimulate religious zeal and fanaticism;...the teaching of the Qur'ān should, therefore, be tempered with instruction in very elementary secular subjects, such as arithmetic." (Bashīr, p.26).

3. Bashīr, p.30.

The parallel model kuttāb was said to have been planned as a gradual substitute to the khalwa.⁽¹⁾

At any rate, by 1908 the States' school system was reported to have been fully established, though on a limited scale, comprising elementary, primary, secondary (academic, technical and military) schools.⁽²⁾

Although the khalwa was still rendering a useful service to the Government's educational system, yet according to MacMichael "it could hardly be regarded as forming an integral part of that edifice".⁽³⁾

However, in the 1920s, and in line with the Government's policy of applying and encouraging "indirect rule and native administration" especially in the countryside and the tribal regions, "it was agreed that [the khalwas] should retain their ancient character as indigenous institutions in which the fakīs instructed the children in the religious duty of reciting the Qur'ān and in the simplest elements of reading and writing."⁽⁴⁾

Accordingly, Mr. Currie's scheme of introducing some reform in a selected number of khalwas - especially those used as

1. Bashīr, p.31.

2. Ibid., p.46.

3. MacMichael, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, p.258.

4. Ibid., p.259.

feeders to the Government schools - was put into effect. Such khalwa reform came to be exemplified in the following measures:

- Exposing the fakīs of the selected khalwas to short and simple courses of instruction,⁽¹⁾ of usually two to three months' duration.⁽²⁾ The subjects taught during the course were said to have covered tajwīd (Qur'ān standard recitation), elementary fiqh, Arabic (grammar and dictation) and arithmetic.⁽³⁾
- At their khalwas the trained fakīs were expected to introduce such elementary subjects as Arabic (Arabic readers), elementary fiqh and arithmetic.⁽⁴⁾
- To help these khalwa carry out their new function in a better way, many of them were provided with modern school teaching aids - such as blackboards, chalk, slates, and Arabic readers, such as al-ʿArabiyya al-Mahbūba.⁽⁵⁾
- To induce the fakīs to undergo the training course and carry out their new tasks, they were paid monthly allowances,

1. MacMichael, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, p.259.

2. See the memorandum of Mr. Scott, Appendix IV, Bashīr, p.223.

3. Badri, vol.II, p.134.

4. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, 15th November, 1981.

5. Interview with Jiddū and Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Majīd, al-Fasher,

ranging from L.E.2 - 6.⁽¹⁾

- These somewhat reformed khalwas came to be known as khalwa nizāmiyya (organized khalwa)⁽²⁾, or assisted khalwas⁽³⁾ - a reference to the Government's monthly financial aid to the teachers of these khalwas.

In time, the number of these assisted khalwas steadily increased from six in 1918, to 400 in 1927 and to the peak of 786 khalwa nizāmiyya in 1931 - embracing, likewise, a rising number of learners of 200, 13,077 and 29,356 respectively, as could be evidence from the table, below.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, the Government's policy in this respect proved to have been "entirely successful",⁽⁵⁾ and as a result, the first year class of the kuttāb school was said to have been abolished and substituted by recruits from the assisted khalwas.⁽⁶⁾

It was partly through the enforcement of its policy, but mainly through the provision of the financial aid, that the

1. Bashīr, p.59.

2. Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.22.

3. RFACS (1925), p.45; Bashīr, p.223 (in this study khalwa nizāmiyya and assisted khalwas are used interchangeably).

4. See table, "Rise and Decline of Assisted Khalwas".

5. RFACS, (1925), p.45.

6. Ibid., (1928), p.93.

Government succeeded in converting more and more traditional khalwas into nizāmiyya or assisted khalwas⁽¹⁾ that were provided with teaching aids and text books (like the kuttāb school),⁽²⁾ and subjected to regular supervision by representatives of the Department of Education.⁽³⁾

What appears to have been of importance to the fakīs and their khalwas was the fact that they seem to have been, in effect, treated as part of the State's educational system. It was that implicit recognition of the khalwa as the basis of the educational system and the material benefits associated with it, which seems to have induced increasing numbers of fakīs to readily agree to have their khalwas transformed into khalwas nizāmiyya of high popularity, as could be indicated by the steady rise in the number of these assisted khalwas, between 1918-1931.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, at the time, the Government came to view the khalwa nizāmiyya as "the best means of spreading a modicum of education among the mass of the people."⁽⁵⁾

On the administrative side this operation led to the

1. See table, below.

2. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Damer) and 'Abd al-Majīd Ismā'īl, al-Fashir.

3. RFACS, (1925), p.45.

4. See the table, below.

5. RFACS, (1927), p.79.

establishment of local inspectorates for khalwas to be responsible to both the local authorities and the Department of Education.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, local administrative shaykhs and nāzirs were reported to have been brought into closer contact with the khalwas and encouraged to take interest in their affairs.⁽²⁾

As a result of all this a great number of khalwas was induced to be transformed into khalwa nizāmiyya. Among these were the once famous khalwa centres of al-Ghubush,⁽³⁾ al-Majādhīb of al-Damer,⁽⁴⁾ Kutranj,⁽⁵⁾ and those of al-fakī Sulayman and Imām 'Abd al-Majāīd at al-Fasher, capital of Darfur.⁽⁶⁾

Not only that but according to an official report the Government had to admit that the khalwa nizāmiyya "was extremely popular and the constant demand for more of these subsidised khalwas [was] severely taxing the Department's resources in respect of training and inspecting staff."⁽⁷⁾

1. Badri, vol.II, p.167.

2. Bashīr, p.59.

3. See the khalwa centre of al-Ghubush, below.

4. See the khalwa centre of al-Majādhīb at al-Damer, below.

5. Interview with al-Shaykh Muṣṭafa 'Abdallāh Nūr, Kutranj, November, 1981.

6. Interview with al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Majāīd Isma'īl and Ḥasan 'Abd al-Majāīd, al-Fasher, 7th December, 1981.

7. RFACS (1927), p.79.

However, the degree of such success and popularity of these khalwas seem to have been closely associated with the Government's changing attitudes and policies towards the khalwa in question as could be illustrated below and as could be indicated by the rise in their numbers between 1918 and 1931 and the decline thereafter.⁽¹⁾

Eventually, the khalwa was attacked. This time - not for being fanatic as had been the previous accusation - but rather for its failure on educational grounds.

In 1930, according to an investigation that was reported to have been carried out in Northern Sudan on the performance of the khalwa, it was revealed that the latter had failed to serve as a successful substitute for the first year of the elementary school, and hence, its development as the future elementary school was said to have been put in doubt.⁽²⁾

By the early 1930s the Government was reported to have changed its hitherto positive attitude and policy towards khalwas. Consequently a concerted campaign of attacks seem to have been launched against these institutions - a reminder of the bitter attacks directed against the traditional khalwas during the first years of the Condominium rule.⁽³⁾

1. See the table below.

2. Bashīr, pp.94-5.

3. See above.

Table No.I

The Rise and Decline of Assisted Khalwas in Relation
to the Schools during the Condominium Rule

Year	<u>Assisted khalwas</u>		Kuttab schools		Subgrade schools	
	Schools	Learners	Schools	Learners	Schools	Learners
1918	6	200	80	7,000		
1927	400	13,077	82	8,057		
1931	786	29,356	89	9,339		
1939	560	17,000	106	13,519	65	6,000
1941	248	12,730	107	16,949	111	7,714
1943	209	10,935	116	18,692	144	10,623
1945	178	10,133	121	19,301	222	15,402
1947	164	8,507	131	23,518	310	26,247
1949	117	6,589	156	27,674	422	33,632
1950	104	6,737	187	30,560	500	42,932

Source: Compiled from annual reports presented by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the British Parliament for Selected Years (1918-1950), each bearing the title: Report on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan in (...the year): His Majesty's Stationery Office, London.

In 1932, Mr. Scott, the Chief Inspector of the Department of Education, submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Director of Education in which he bitterly criticized the educational role of the assisted khalwas.

He dismissed the unassisted khalwas as being of little or no educational use.⁽¹⁾ As for the assisted (nizāmiyya) khalwas he pointed out that they were suffering from two main problems:⁽²⁾

- a) Attachment to and basic dependence on an ancient Arab tradition of learning by rote; and that
- b) the duration of the training course for the teachers of these khalwas - of two to three months - was too short and the occasional inspection visit ineffective, to bring about any improvement in the proficiency of the weak teacher.⁽³⁾

Hence, the low standard and poor quality khalwa education. To substantiate this Mr. Scott states that even the few best khalwas needed two to three years to bring their boys to the standard attained by the preparatory class of the elementary school in one year.⁽⁴⁾ To enable a boy to read and write simple correspondence, six to eight years at an average khalwa were

1. Scott/Bashir, p.222.

2. Ibid., p.223.

3. Ibid., p.223.

4. Ibid.

needed. Not only that, but according to him, the khalwa had failed to inspire the child's mind and body.⁽¹⁾

Mr. Scott then directs his bitter criticism to the methods of teaching and learning and the insanitary condition of some of the khalwas, at the time.

"To sit for seven or nine hours out of the twenty-four, some of them at night in dark and dirty hovels, flies buzz round one's gummed eyelids, to learn double-dutch by heart and to be beaten at intervals by a lazy and stupid assistant, it is hard for a child of six to ten years old, even though he be a Sudanese."⁽²⁾

In reference to the khalwa nizāmiyya of the three northernmost provinces, however, Mr. Scott admits that they were better - because they were originally better, and because more time, care and money had been spent on their improvement.⁽³⁾ Most of them succeed in teaching simple reading, writing and arithmetic to a majority of their students, though at the expenditure of infinite labour.⁽⁴⁾ However, according to him, the boys' minds were deadened by the rote system as much as elsewhere.⁽⁵⁾ Not only that, but the negative effect of rote-learning at the

1. Scott/Bashīr, p.223.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

khalwa was said to have been transferred to the Government's elementary school.⁽¹⁾

In the light of such critical reports on the condition of the khalwa nizāmiyya, the Government was said to have changed its policy and attitude towards the khalwa and as a result the financial aid was seriously cut down.⁽²⁾

In 1934, and in line with the recommendations of Winter's committee regarding education,⁽³⁾ the khalwa was brushed aside as an educational agency of little value. Hence, subsidies to the assisted khalwas were reported to have been stopped.⁽⁴⁾

Not only that, but instead of reforming these khalwas a new two-year elementary village school - the subgrade - was established with the purpose of assimilating the function of the better khalwas and replacing the less-efficient.⁽⁵⁾ These subgrade schools were financed and controlled by the local authorities and subjected to the supervision of the Government and were intended to give rudimentary schooling.⁽⁶⁾

1. Scott/Bashīr, p.223.

2. RFACS,

3. The members of that committee were: R.G. Winter, Director of Education (Chairman), Sir Harold MacMichael, Civil Secretary, Pass and MacGregor (members), and V.L. Griffiths, secretary, (Bashīr, p.98, n.1).

4. RFACS,

5. The Sudan: A Record of Progress, p.20.

6. Ibid.

Such schools were rightly viewed by the people as rivals to the khalwas and were reported to have steadily spread all over the countryside - thus undermining the position of the khalwa.⁽¹⁾

In 1937, the educational system in the Sudan was investigated by the Lord De La Warr Commission.⁽²⁾ That Commission, too, was highly critical of the khalwa education.

Influenced by Mr. Scott's views regarding the khalwa, it seems,⁽³⁾ and being primarily concerned with the modern educational system, the Commission focussed its attention on the negative effect of the khalwa on the school - as exemplified in the transference of the practice of rote learning from the former to the latter.⁽⁴⁾ And although the Commission could not visit the better khalwas of the northernmost provinces of the country, it came to the conclusion on khalwas that "as centres of education in the true sense [the Commission] found little to commend in them".⁽⁵⁾

1. See table no.I, above.

2. The Committee was invited by the Sudan government to enquire and report on the Educational System. It was headed by Lord De La Warr and composed nine members - among them two M.P.s (Bashīr, p.111).

3. See the memorandum of Mr. Scott, above.

4. De La Warr, p.7.

5. Ibid., p.8.

Nevertheless, in view of the traditional support to these religious educational institutions among the masses, and the fact that they were still widely spread,⁽¹⁾ the Commission seems to have been in favour of seeing them reformed instead of being discarded. While it advised the Government not to interfere in the religious functions of the khalwas "no effort should be spared to induce the religious authorities to improve them as schools."⁽²⁾

In 1939, the Graduates Congress, as representative of the educated Sudanese, submitted a lengthy note on education to the Government in which they reacted against the Government's policy of cutting off the financial aid from the assisted khalwas.⁽³⁾ They called to attention that the basic role of the khalwa as a religious educational institution - disseminating the Qur'ān (together with reading and writing) and religious instruction.⁽⁴⁾ Now the Government had decided that the subsidized khalwas were not serving their purpose (i.e., as a substitute for the first year of the elementary school) these khalwas (the ex-assisted and non-assisted) should be supported by the Government to play their religious role in addition to their essential function as a means of combatting illiteracy in

1. The Commission took note of the existence, in 1937, of 1,500 khalwas (700 of them were assisted khalwas). (De La Warr, p.7).
2. De La Warr, p.8.
3. Congress/Bashir, p.241.
4. Ibid.

the country.⁽¹⁾ Hence, they demanded that the Government's financial assistance be resumed for the maintenance of these traditional religious institutions and they suggested that such aid should not be paid directly to the individual fakīs but should be entrusted with the Board of al-Ma'had al-'Ilmī which in consultation with the local authorities would distribute among the khalwas.⁽²⁾

In the period 1938-1946 the khalwas were reported to have again been linked to the Government's educational system; and grants-in-aid were resumed and increased, but restricted to those khalwa nizāmiyya that had maintained their relatively high standard.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, as a result of the steady expansion in elementary and subgrade schools, the number of khalwas was steadily decreasing.⁽⁴⁾

An important factor which seems to have increasingly induced the masses to switch their children from their traditional khalwas - especially in the regions of northern and central Sudan - was the fact that the school was the recognized gateway

1. Congress/Bashir, p.241.

2. Ibid., pp.241-2.

3. Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.23.

4. See the table above.

to salaried employment in the modern sector - a privilege that was denied to the khalwa.

In evidence of such a policy, Griffiths writes (1950),

"For most of this century, the Sudan Government followed the policy of limiting the quantity of education to the amount of employment available.

Almost all of the employment was in the Government's service....The schools were...the door to that

[Government employment]."⁽¹⁾

Hence, as a result of the series of harsh criticism that seem to have discredited the khalwa and led the Government to discard it for failure to fit in the latter's system, and owing to the subsequent cutting off of the financial aid from these khalwas, and owing to the creation of the rival subgrade school and the steady expansion in both the subgrade and the elementary school, and above all in view of the superior facilities of the school and its recognition as the gateway to modern sector employment, the khalwa steadily declined in existence and status. The table above shows that the decline in the number of the assisted khalwas took place at the time when the financial aid was reduced or cut down, and at a time when both the elementary and subgrade schools were expanding.⁽²⁾

1. Griffiths, p.145.

2. See table no.I, above.

The khalwa fakīs (the teachers) were said to have been likewise drastically affected by such changes in the Government's attitudes and policies - especially when a village khalwa closed down, as many did, resulting in loss of jobs. Some ex-khalwa fakīs, however, were re-employed as subgrade school teachers. At any rate, the traditional high social status of the khalwa faki seems to have been greatly eroded.

As a result of the general decline in the popularity and number of khalwas in central and northern Sudan, the special khalwa inspectorate at the provincial capitals ceased to exist and their functions were taken over by the Province Educational Officer (P.E.O.) who became responsible for elementary, subgrade, adult and khalwa education.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATIONAL PERIOD

In contrast to the unfavourable attitudes and policies of the Condominium period towards the khalwa, under National rule since (1956) the State's attitudes and policies seem to have been highly supportive. In this respect, however, the State seems to have been more concerned with the building up of the central administrative machinery and the setting of policies and the mobilization of positive attitudes than with the introduction of significant changes and improvements at the khalwa level.

The main administrative, relevant policies and related developments during this period are outlined below.

A. The building up of the administrative machinery seems to have been given top priority.

I. The Establishment of the "Department of Religious Affairs":

In accordance with the Ministerial Act No.258 issued on 8th December, 1955, the first department for religious affairs came into being.⁽¹⁾ Among its main functions was "to look after khalwas and institutions concerned with the memorization of

1. Hamad al-Nil, p.48.

the Qur'ān".⁽¹⁾

The Department of Religious Affairs was then an auxiliary of the Ministry of Education; and through its director it was directly responsible to the Minister (of Education).⁽²⁾

II. Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān

By 1964 it was realised that, in view of the complexity of the khalwa problems at the time, and considering its future development and reforms that there was an urgent need that a special autonomous body be created to be exclusively in charge of the khalwa affairs.⁽³⁾

Accordingly, the director of the Department of Religious Affairs (Dr. Kāmil al-Bāqir), was reported to have submitted a request to the Government through the Minister of Education regarding the creation of a Qur'ānic administrative agency - Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Other areas of responsibility of the Department were:
religious institutions (post-khalwa); mosques and endowments; preaching, religious guidance and hisba; al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar; the Sūfī Orders.
 2. Hamad al-Nīl, p.49.
 3. Ibid., p.59; the term Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān (kindling of the tuqqāba or the bonfire around which the learners of the Qur'ān used to sit and study their lawhs by night - a reference to the revival of the khalwas.)
 4. Hamad al-Nīl, p.59.

The request emphasized the following points:⁽¹⁾

- (i) The importance of learning the Qur'ān by heart, on the one hand, and the necessity of looking into the factors that seem to have repelled the people from doing so, on the other.
- (ii) Ways and means of inducing the masses to embark on the memorization of the Qur'ān.
- (iii) The khalwa situation, then, and its future development.

The scheme does not seem to have met with a positive response and hence had to be shelved, then.⁽²⁾

However, following the successful popular October Revolution of 1964, in the Sudan, and under more conducive climate, the Minister of Education, then, (Badawī Muṣṭafa) was said to have adopted the scheme and secured the approval of the Cabinet on 7th July 1965.⁽³⁾ The special Qur'ānic agency - Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān - was said to have been created⁽⁴⁾ to pursue the realization of the following specified objectives:⁽⁵⁾

- a) Teaching the Qur'ān for memorization, and in accordance with the rules of tajwīd and standard recitation.

1. Ḥamad al-Nīl, p.59.

2. Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.24; Ḥamad al-Nīl, p.59.

3. Ḥamad al-Nīl, p.59; Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.24.

4. Ibid.

5. Ḥamad al-Nīl, pp.59-60; Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.25.

- b) Dissemination of the Qur'ānic teachings which call for the practice of the ideal moral conduct amongst the members of the community.
- c) Preparation of qualified reciters to be in charge of teaching the Qur'ān according to the rules of the Standard Readings.
- d) To contribute, with other institutions of education, to present the Qur'ān as a comprehensive way of life for the Muslims in respect of belief, worship and legislation.

The realization of the above stated objectives of Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān was envisaged to be carried out through the following means:⁽¹⁾

- (i) Provision of adequate technical supervision and financial aid to functioning khalwas.
- (ii) Establishment of centres for training of khalwa teachers and reciters of the Qur'ān.
- (iii) Establishment of intermediate trade centres for training teachers of trades - such as carpentry, smithcraft and fitter's trade - which were decided to be added to the khalwa curriculum, in order to make the khalwa more responsive to the environmental needs of the learners and more appealing to parents.

1. Hamad al-Nīl, p.60; Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, pp.25-6.

(iv) Provision of prizes to those khalwa learners who would memorize the Qur'ān, by heart.

(v) Establishment of a post-khalwa institute for Qur'ānic Readings.

It is worth noting that, by 1967, most of the above stated targets seem to have been realized, as could be demonstrated later.

In order to strengthen the central agency - Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān - so as to play its roles more efficiently, the Minister of Education was reported to have made a decision on 30th December 1965 according to which the agency was transformed into an autonomous body, under a council of trustees who would act on behalf of the Minister, as regards decisions on administrative and financial matters.⁽¹⁾

III. The Creation of Regional Inspectorates:

In order to provide the envisaged technical supervision and financial aid to the working khalwas, in the countryside, a number of regional inspectorates for khalwas was established. Every two provinces were to be served by one inspectorate which would be, also, in charge of the assessment of the financial aid to be granted to individual khalwas that were seen to be entitled.⁽²⁾

1. Ḥamad al-Nīl, p.61.

2. Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.29. See "Financial Aspect of Khalwa Education" for details financing khalwa education during this period, below.

Under the regime of the May Revolution (1969-1985) the trend of favourable attitudes and conducive policies towards khalwas seems to have been more emphasized.⁽¹⁾

On the administrative aspect, the state's effort was exemplified in the consolidation of the existing machinery - at both the central and the regional levels, as could be illustrated below:

IV. The Creation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs:

For the first time in the history of the Sudan a full ministry was established⁽²⁾ to be in charge of the religious affairs in the country - main among which were the advancement of Islamic studies, preaching and guidance and looking after the activities of the religious institutions such as mosques and khalwas.⁽³⁾

V. The Department of Religious Studies:

Under the new Ministry of Religious Affairs, four specialized

1. See below.

2. According to the Presidential decree No.VI, on 12th October, 1971 (al-Nashāt, p.2).

3. Al-Nashāt, p.2.

departments were established.⁽¹⁾ The agency - Iḥyā' Nār al-Qur'ān - was reported to have been transformed into the Department for Religious Studies, which took over its functions. This Department continued functioning for a time as being the sole central body directly in charge of the activities of the khalwas all over the country.

VI. The Establishment of Regional Departments of Religious Affairs.

With the establishment of the system of regional governments, each government became responsible for running its own affairs under regional ministers.⁽²⁾ The administration of all religious affairs in the regional government came to be coordinated under a regional unit called "the Department for Religious Affairs", which in turn was responsible administratively to the Regional Minister for Education and Social Services.⁽³⁾

One of the major functions of the Regional Department of

1. These four new departments which together constitute the general secretariat of the Ministry were:

- a) The Department of Religious Studies.
- b) The Department of Da'wa and Religious Guidance.
- c) The Department of Mosques and Endowments.
- d) The Department of Christian Affairs.

(al-Nashāt, p. 4).

2. See Local Government Act, 1972.

3. Interview with Director of Department of Religious Affairs, al-Fashir, 5th December 1981.

Religious Affairs was to look after the khalwas and their activities - administratively, technically and financially.⁽¹⁾

VII. The Supreme Council for Religious Affairs:

This is a consultative council to the President. Its overriding objective is to safeguard the right of society to develop in accordance with its religious heritage.⁽²⁾

Among the main functions of this council are:⁽³⁾

- a) The organisation of the activities of the religious institutions in a way that helps them realize their objectives as regards worship and services.
- b) Proposal of religious services that the State should finance.
- c) Looking after the Sūfī Orders and directing them to be in the service of their genuine religious aims.

B. The State's Supportive Attitude Towards Khalwa Education:

A call for the return to the Qur'ān and the revival of the Islamic cultural heritage:

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- 1. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Alī Hasabū, Director of Department of Religious Affairs, al-Fashir, 5th December, 1981.
 - 2. Al-Nashat, p.2.
 - 3. Ibid., p.4.

The main theme of the State's religious policy seems to have been embodied in the constant call for the return to the Qur'ān and the revival of the Islamic cultural heritage in the Sudan. This could be illustrated by references to official documents such as:

- The permanent Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan.
- The speeches of the President.
- The declared policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.
- The set policies of the Supreme Council for Religious Affairs.

The following extracts from the above mentioned sources substantiate the point:

a) The Constitution: Article 9(A) reads as follows: "The Islamic Shari'a and custom are the two main sources of legislation in the Sudan."⁽¹⁾ Article 16(A) reads: "In the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, religion is Islam. Society is guided by Islam the religion of the majority and the State works towards the realization of its values."⁽²⁾

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1. Sudan Gazette, The Permanent Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, p.2.
 2. Ibid., p.4.

b) The State's "Five-Year Phased Programmes for Action (1972-1977)" launched for comprehensive development in the Sudan embraces the programmes of the different ministries and bodies. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has included as priorities in its programmes:

- The conducting of research on the religious culture in the Sudan - its past, present and future development by devising appropriate approaches and programmes that would help in its development and dissemination.⁽¹⁾
- Work towards the realization of the virtues and supreme ideals of the Islamic religion...and the revival of the Islamic cultural heritage.⁽²⁾
- Dissemination of the genuine Islamic culture and consolidation of its spiritual aspect in order to make its positive impact on the masses.⁽³⁾

c) The Annual Festivals of the Qur'ān.

As a practical manifestation of the State's effort to encourage the people to return to the Qur'ān - and in effect to revive the khalwas of the Qur'ān - the Ministry of Religious Affairs started in 1394/1974 a tradition of annual celebrations, on the occasion of the new Hijra year, for competition in the

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1. Barāmiḥ ——— al-Nashāt, p.34.
 2. Barāmiḥ ——— al-Nashāt, p.38.
 3. Barāmiḥ ——— al-Nashāt, p.37.

recitation of the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾ The competition was open to all citizens, but usually the bulk of candidates were khalwa learners selected, through prior tests, from all over the country.⁽²⁾

The final competition - or the grand festival - was held at the capital, Khartoum, where it was attended by President Numayri, the Minister of Religious Affairs, the notables, religious bodies and teachers of the best khalwas.

On such an occasion, both the President and the Minister of Religious Affairs used to deliver speeches focussing on the Qur'ān and the Islamic teachings as the backbone of the Sudanese cultural heritage and, hence, calling upon the people to return to the Qur'ān and revive its institutions of learning - especially the khalwas.⁽³⁾

At the end of the evening's celebrations the top twenty or forty reciters would be announced and would receive their money prizes from the President.⁽⁴⁾

In recognition of their highly appreciated efforts and as a gesture of boosting their morale, the names of the khalwas from

1. Al-Mahrajān, p. 3.

2. See Regulations for the President's prize for Competitors in the Qur'ān Festivals, below.

3. See the President's and the Minister's speeches, below.

4. Al-Mahjarān, p.73; see Regulations for President's Prize, 7(b), p.593.

which the top competitors were selected would be announced by the Minister and their Shaykhs would be received by the President. Symbolic money prizes would be given to them.⁽¹⁾

It is worth noting that all aspects of the grand festival were usually transmitted live to the public by the media - on the television, the radio and by the press. Thus the occasion and the message would be highly publicized, and the khalwa teachers and their students would receive considerable moral support.⁽²⁾

The table, below, shows the names of the top twenty khalwas from which the top reciters were selected at the grand festival of the Qur'ān competition held in Khartoum.

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1. Al-Mahjarān, p. 73; see Regulations, below, p.594, 8(b).
 2. The writer's observations.

Table No.II

The Main Khalwa Centres in the Sudan (1977)

No.	Shaykh in Charge	Name of <u>Khalwa</u>	Province
1.	'Ali Bitāi	Hamishkorayb	Kasala
2.	Al-Sharīf 'Alī M. Nūr	Tamālīh	Red Sea
3.	Al-Rayyah Ḥamad al-Nīl	Wad al-Fādni	Gezira
4.	Al-Jaylī M. Abū Qurūn	Abū Qurūn	Khartoum
5.	<u>Al-fakī</u> Ahmed al-Maqbūl	Al-'Awāyda	Gezira
6.	Al-Mamūn M. al-Amin Abū Salih	Wad Abū Sālīh	Khartoum
7.	Yousif <u>al-fakī</u> 'Umar b.Badr	Umm Dawwan Bān	Khartoum
8.	Abū 'Āqla al-Shaykh al-Rayyah	Tayba 'Abd al-Baqī	Gezira
9.	Al-Jaylī al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Bāqī	Abū Ḥalāqīm	White Nile
10.	Al-Ja'ali Ḥāj Ḥamad	Kadabās	Al-Nīl
11.	'Uthman <u>al-fakī</u> 'Umar b.Badr	Al-Nukhayra	Gezira
12.	'Abd al-Hay Abdallāh al-Ḥāj Jābir	Al-Juwayr	Al-Nīl
13.	Ḥamad al-Muqaddam Muḍawwī	Al-Shitayb	White Nile
14.	'Alī Muḥammad Bakhīt	Al-Karū	Northern
15.	Ḥamza Ahmed 'Awadallāh	Al-Sifayrāya	White Nile
16.	Al-Mubārak <u>al-fakī</u> al-Ṭayyib	Al-Shaykh al-Baṣīr	Gezira
17.	Dafa'allāh Muḥammad	Al-Kiraymit	Gezira
18.	Al-Makkāwī <u>al-fakī</u> al-Faḍl	Wad N'umān	Gezira
19.	'Abd al-Raḥmān Adam	Ḥay al-Wadī	S. Darfur
20.	'Uthmān al-Khalīfa 'Alī	Al-Khatmīyya	Kasala

Source: al-Mahrajān, p.68.

- d) The speeches of the President and the Minister of Religious Affairs :

In the speeches of the President and the Minister of Religious Affairs, especially on the occasion of the annual festivals of the Qur'ān, the call to return to the Qur'ān seems to have been the constant theme and the over-riding aim. The following extracts substantiate this.

On the occasion of the first festival of the Qur'ān,⁽¹⁾ the President stressed that:

"The Islamic religion, based on the Qur'ān, is the essence of our civilization...the distinct feature of our society and the force behind our social solidarity and cohesion.⁽²⁾ It is the source of the ideals and values on which our cultural civilization is built."⁽³⁾

Reminding the Sudanese of the historical role of the Qur'ān in moulding the Muslim Sudan, the President was reported to have said that:

"The rise of the Muslim Sudan in the 10th/16th century was attributed to the Qur'ān...It was due to the efforts

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1. The first Festival of the Qur'ān was held at the National Museum, Khartoum, on 1st Muharram, 1394/24th January 1974, (al-Mahrājan, p. 5.
 2. Al-Mahrājan, p. 8.
 3. Ibid.

of the teachers of the Qur'ān and the 'ulamā' who spread all over the Funj kingdom and contemporary sultanates, establishing their khalwas, mosques and zāwiyas - disseminating the Qur'ānic teachings amongst the masses, that the Muslim Sudan emerged."⁽¹⁾

"Today the impact of the Islamic civilization based on the Qur'ān seems to be manifested in almost all of our glorious social values and practices."⁽²⁾

"Hence, if we are to reassert and restore our identity and cultured heritage we have to return to the Qur'ān and the Islamic heritage."⁽³⁾

In fact, the call of "a return to the Qur'ān and the revival of our Islamic cultural heritage" has been repeated by the President, year after year, at the annual festivals of the Qur'ān.⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, the same theme and message were echoed by the Minister for Religious Affairs - Dr. 'Awn al-Sharīf Qāsim - on the same and similar occasions.⁽⁵⁾

On the occasion of the fourth annual festival of the Qur'ān,⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Mahrajān, p. 8.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.9.

4. See for example: al-Mahrajān, pp. 5-28; al-Bayān, pp.4-6.

5. Al-Bayān, p.8; al-Mahrajān, pp. 29-50.

6. The fourth Annual Conference of the Qur'ān was held at Qā'at al-Ṣadāqa, Khartoum, 1st Muḥarram, 1397/December 1976.

the President declared that:

"...We will seek our identity by a return to the Qur'ān ...and by following the example of our ancestors...we will direct all our efforts to teaching and learning the Qur'ān at our religious, cultural and educational institutions,...and we will live according to its guidance at our homes and when pursuing all activities of life."⁽¹⁾

The President also emphasized that the Qur'ān would be disseminated to all sectors of the society:

"We will teach it to our children and to our men and women...and will direct all efforts to the attainment of this objective."⁽²⁾

The attitude of the States towards the religious institutions seems to have been indicated also by the Minister of Religious Affairs when he announced that:

"...Had it not been for the khalwas, zāwiyas, mosques and 'qubbas' which have spread all over the country, the Sudan would not have been in possession of its present civilization."⁽³⁾

1. Al-Mahrajān, p.27; al-Bayān, p.5.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Mahrajān, p.40.

In reference to the hostile and unfavourable policy of the Condominium rule towards khalwas, the Minister said that "it was out of fear of the revival of our culture and civilization through the Qur'ān that the colonial rule waged a war against the Qur'ān and its institutions - the khalwas - and restricted its teaching to neglected and unrecognized traditional khalwas."⁽¹⁾ "To reverse such a policy," the Minister declared, "May Revolution has embarked on a policy of giving the Qur'ānic institutions, the khalwas, all the encouragement and support they need."⁽²⁾ Not only that, but the Government was concerned with the dissemination of the Qur'ān amongst the masses - children, youth, men and women - whether through children's nurseries and khalwas attached to mosques, consolidation classes for students at the mosques or whether through the Islamic cultural centres, for men and women, or at the 'ilm and tajwīd halqas which are spread all over the country - at mosques, khalwas, zāwiyas and homes of the 'ulamā."⁽³⁾

In addition to the above, the State's positive attitude towards these institutions seems to have been consolidated by the personal and frequent visits of the President to the religious institutions - especially to the khalwas and their Ṣūfī Shaykhs - which seem to have greatly boosted the morale and encouraged the khalwa people to double their efforts in carrying out their

1. Al-Mahjarān, p.47.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Bayān, p.9.

sacred mission.⁽¹⁾

Revival of Religious Educational Institutions:

As an effective means of disseminating the Qur'ān amongst the masses and as an embodiment of the revival of the cultural heritage the government supportive policy has been directed to the revival of the traditional Islamic educational institutions - the mosque and the khalwa - and to the creation of linkage between the khalwa and higher institutions of study:

a) The policy towards the mosque and khalwa:

One of the priorities of the "Phased Programme of Action",⁽²⁾ was:

"The introduction of a drastic change in the mosque - in both concept and form, in order to enable it to resume its role as a centre of worship as well as a source of educational and cultural enlightenment."⁽³⁾

As for the khalwa, the State's policy included in the Phased Programme for Action towards it, calls for the

"activation and organization of khalwas in the different regions of the Sudan and the setting up of new programmes

1. Al-Bayān, p.9,

2. Al-Nashāt, p.39.

3. Ibid., p.40.

of learning conducive to the child's development and education, on the one hand, and appealing to the citizens of different ages to induce them to embark on learning the Qur'ān, on the other."⁽¹⁾

In reference to the envisaged policy towards mosques and khalwas the President, addressing the Sudanese Socialist Union, declared that the State's objective was to transform the mosque into a multi-purpose cultural centre that would attract people of all ages and influence them, spiritually and culturally, through its activities.⁽²⁾

The new mosque, the President explained, would consist of:⁽³⁾

- A nursery for the infants.
- A khalwa for children, for learning the Qur'ān.
- Consolidation classes, for school pupils to revise their lessons, especially Arabic and religious studies, during their spare time.
- 'Ilm circles for the adults - especially residents of the neighbourhood.
- Public lecture halls for the youth and adults.

In addition to the above functions, the mosque was also

1. Al-Nashāt, p.40.

2. Ibid., p.48.

3. Ibid.

envisaged to serve as a meeting centre for the Social Welfare Committee of the neighbourhood.⁽¹⁾

Referring to the khalwa, the President said that it would be developed to serve as a feeder to the general system of education and as an extra aid to the facilities of the formal system of education.⁽²⁾ It would thus help, also, in providing education to those who were not absorbed by the school - hence helping in the eradication of illiteracy.⁽³⁾

Elaborating on what the President had already stated about the khalwa, the Minister of Religious Affairs, on the occasion of the Second Festival of the Qur'ān, declared that the traditional khalwa would be transformed into a "model khalwa" in which basic subjects - such as the Qur'ān, Arabic, religious subjects and arithmetic⁽⁴⁾ would be taught by graduates of the Qur'ānic secondary institutes.⁽⁵⁾ Then it would serve as a feeder to the modern system of education in the sense that those completing it would be qualified to join directly the Qur'ānic general secondary school and then climb the ladder to higher education.⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Nashāt, p.49.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.36; cf. the subjects taught by the khalwa nizāmiyya, above.

5. Al-Nashāt, p.36.

6. Ibid.

Khalwa spread at present:

As a result of the overall conducive and supportive State's policy towards khalwas, as briefly indicated above, on the one hand, and the massive support for the trend in certain regions of the country,⁽¹⁾ on the other, the Sudan under national rule has witnessed a steady build up of traditional khalwas. Many of the old and almost dead khalwas have been brought to life and hundreds of new ones have emerged.

A survey conducted in 1976 has revealed the existence of more than three thousand khalwas,⁽²⁾ spread all over the country. The table below illustrates the number of khalwas that existed in the Sudan (in 1976) and their distribution over the provinces and the number of students they held.⁽³⁾ However, the actual number of khalwas functioning in the Sudan is believed to greatly exceed the registered number of 2,729 in 1976, as shown in the table.⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, from his actual observations and visits to the different regions of the Sudan - and especially to Darfur province - the writer has come to believe that there are hundreds of small and unregistered khalwas, spread all over the villages.⁽⁵⁾ Accordingly, it could be safely assumed that the number of

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1. See the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāi in Eastern Sudan and khalwas in Darfur Province, for example, as indicated by the table, below.
 2. Nūr, p. 3 ; see table below.
 3. See table below.
 4. Nūr, pp.3-4.
 5. The writer's visits to the khalwas, November-December, 1981.

khalwas in the Sudan, today (1981) exceeds 3,000.

Although khalwas are spread everywhere, yet, as could be seen from the table, their distribution over the country has not been even. In fact, the survey shows that about 65% of the existing khalwas in the country are located in the provinces of Western Sudan (Northern Darfur, Southern Darfur, Southern Kordufan and Northern Kordufan).⁽¹⁾ Next, in respect to the number of khalwas, are the provinces of Eastern Sudan (Red Sea and Kassala).⁽²⁾

The reasons behind this are not difficult to detect. They are a complex of historical, economic and social factors.

As has been indicated earlier, under the Condominium rule, the khalwa, for various reasons, was bitterly opposed and discarded.⁽³⁾ Various means were employed to uproot it. The modern school was introduced as a parallel and rival educational institution. With the government backing, it eventually supplanted the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Nūr, p.4. This marks a shift to the fringes, it seems to pose a contrast to the khalwa spread during the Funj period (910/1504-1236/1821) when the bulk of khalwas were concentrated in the riverain region - along the Niles (see khalwa spread during the Funj period, above.)
 2. See table, below.
 3. See attitudes and condition of khalwas under Condominium rule.
 4. See table no. j, above.

Table No.III
Khalwas and their Distribution
in the Sudan (1976)

Province	Number of Khalwas	Students
Red Sea	209	15,050
Kasala	182	13,105
Northern Darfur	449	32,328
Southern Darfur	441	31,752
Northern Kordofan	401	28,872
Southern Kordofan	430	30,960
Northern	127	9,150
Nile	117	8,428
Gezira	100	7,209
White Nile	60	4,426
Khartoum	60	4,351
Blue Nile	50	3,610
Upper Nile	29	?
Bahr al-Ghazal	48	?
Equatoria	26	?
Total	2,729	

Source: Nūr, p.3.

Immediately after independence and during the 1960s, and with relatively abundant employment opportunities in the modern sector, there was a social demand for the school which came⁽¹⁾ to be the only recognized gateway to such employment - to the disadvantage of the almost forgotten khalwas, especially in Northern and Central Sudan.

Consequently, traditional public support to the khalwa in these regions seems to have been much weakened. Parents, taking into consideration the future employment of their children it seems, have been induced to switch their children from the⁽²⁾ khalwa to the school.

Nevertheless, in line with the general trend of khalwa revival, the few Sūfī khalwas that survived the Condominium rule - in addition to others - seem to have been renovated and revived into elaborate traditional khalwa centres, functioning in the school-dominated regions of Northern and Central Sudan. However, failing to attract learners from their local communities, the Shaykhs of these khalwas came to rely for supply of students population (for these khalwas) from outside their regions. Today, in effect, most of the learners at the khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan come from Western Sudan (Kordufan and Darfur). This is especially true of the main boarding khalwa centres such as Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, UmmDawwan Bān, Ṭabya Qurashī and

1. See Griffiths, p.145.

2. See the khalwas of Kadabas, UmmDawwan Ban, Hamishkorayb and Wad al-Fadnī, below.

Wad al-Fadnī.⁽¹⁾

Such arrangement seems to have been beneficial to both parties: those in charge of the revived khalwas (the Sūfī Shaykhs and the fakīs) on the one hand, and the learners - the Muhājirīn, on the other.

To the khalwa Shaykhs the flourishing of the khalwas seems to have been regarded as a revival of their glorious religious heritage and hence a continuation of the traditional roles and practices of their ancestors. In addition, it seems to have been a source of comfortable living and high social prestige.

The learners - the Muhājirīn - on the other hand, seem to have been attracted to these remote khalwas from their home districts in Western Sudan, in response to the following factors:

- (a) The custom of hijra.⁽²⁾ There has been a generations-old conviction and practice amongst the people of Western Sudan - especially the Fur that learning the Qur'ān by heart was a principal obligation and that a learner can never attain such a goal while studying in his locality -

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1. On visiting these khalwas, the writer found out that the majority of their learners were from Western Sudan - Darfur and Kordufan (see these khalwa centres surveyed, below).
 2. See Students hijra for Study, below.

hence, the practice of the hijra (migration for study), to a remote khalwa, away from home.

- (b) At the boarding khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan the muhājirīn would usually avail themselves of better and secured living facilities than they could do so elsewhere.
- (c) The khalwa educational system and facilities in Northern and Central Sudan are generally more advanced than elsewhere.
- (d) Studying in an Arabic-speaking environment would facilitate learning the Arabic language - and hence learning the Qur'ān more quickly.⁽¹⁾

From the brief survey of attitudes and condition of khalwas under National rule, it seems that despite the official rhetoric and the apparently positive attitudes and supportive policies for the khalwa and despite the considerable expansion in the number of khalwas, no genuine significant change or improvement seems to have been introduced in the more important aspect of quality. Hence, in effect, the khalwa has been revived on the same centuries old lines and form, irrespective of changes in time and the needs of the people or the requirements of the age.

As an evidence of this phenomenon that despite the impressive physical renovation of the khalwa centres of the

1. (a) - (c) see the khalwas of the Riverain region: Kadabas, UmmDawwan Bān and Wad al-Fadnī, below.

riverain region,⁽¹⁾ they failed to introduce similar improvements in their curricula, methods of teaching, educational facilities, teacher training, financing system, etc., in order to make them more competitive with the school and to enable them to respond to the needs of the people of their localities. Consequently, they have been almost practically shunned by learners from their own regions.⁽²⁾

Although now they are providing a useful service (educational, religious, accommodation and upkeep) to a large number of learners - mainly from Western Sudan - yet they have not been induced to introduce change to respond to the needs of the people of their own localities.⁽³⁾

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1. The reference is to such khalwas as those of Kadabas, Abū Qurūn, Umā Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādni and Tayba (for more details see the present-day khalwa centres surveyed, below).
 2. Ibid.
 3. See the Curricula and Books, the Methods of Teaching and the Teachers Training at the khalwa centres of the riverain region mentioned above.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXAMPLES OF KHALWAS

A. The khalwas of al-Ghubush in Later Stages:

The two-stage khalwas of al-Ghubush which have been mentioned in the Funj period, continued during the Turco-Egyptian rule when conditions returned to normal after the first years of invasion and the repercussion of the murder of Ismā'īl Pasha at Shendi. The khalwas of al-Ghubush, then, were said to have resumed their traditional teaching roles of the Qur'ān and 'ilm by the teachers of the same family.

About 1280/1864, for example, the khalwa of the Qur'ān, attended by 153 learners, was run by al-faqīh al-Amin b. Muḥammad b. Khūjalī b. Muḥammad,⁽¹⁾ brother of al-faqīh 'Abdallāh b. Ḥamad.⁽²⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, pp.170-2 and 187.

2. Al-faqīh 'Abdallāh was the last of al-Ghubush to serve during the Funj rule - teaching the Qur'ān (al-Tabaqāt, p.282).

Similarly, the khalwa for teaching 'ilm was under al-faqīh Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Khūjalī and was reported to have been attended by 57 students at the time.⁽¹⁾

During this period, the khalwa of al-Ghubush, like many of the main khalwas of the day, seems to have been financially dependent on the aid - in cash and kind - which it used to receive, on request, from the Egyptian Government.⁽²⁾

The 'ilm courses at the khalwa conducted by al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Khayr (teacher of al-Mahdī) were said to have included fiqh, (Khalīl and al-Risāla), tawhīd, Alfiyyat of Ibn Mālik (grammar), taṣawwuf and sciences of the Qur'ān,⁽³⁾ The teaching of the Qur'ān - in addition to reading and writing, on the other hand, was conducted by al-faqīh al-Amīn.⁽⁴⁾

The above mentioned courses of 'ilm, in addition to the Qur'ān, clearly illustrate the relatively high standard the khalwa maintained during the Turco-Egyptian period.

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1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, pp.170-2, 187.
 2. See "Financial Aspect of khalwa Education", below.
 3. Information from the khalīfa of the khalwa in November, 1981; see Shuqayr, vol.III, p.115.
 4. Information from the khalīfa, November, 1981.

It was during the time of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr that the khalwa was said to have been revived to the highest possible level.⁽¹⁾

The breakout of the Mahdiyya Revolution towards the end of the Turco-Egyptian rule seems to have marked the steep decline of the academic calibre of that khalwa.

It was also under al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr that the khalwa of al-Ghubush, like that of al-Majādhīb, was reported to have taken a leading role in the armed religio-political opposition to the Turco-Egyptian regime at the time of the Mahdiyya revolution.⁽²⁾ It should be recalled, in this respect, that al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr was a product of al-Majādhīb khalwas - at al-Damer, where he learnt the Qur'ān and at al-Sūfī al-Azraq where he studied 'ilm.⁽³⁾

When the revolution of the Mahdiyya broke out, however, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr was said to have been appointed by al-Mahdī (his ex-student at al-Ghubush) as chief amīr over the Berber region.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, he suspended the khalwa teaching at al-Ghubush and even pulled down its building and transferred its

1. Information from the khalīfa, November, 1981.

2. See attitudes and condition of khalwas under "the Mahdiyya Period", above.

3. Information from the khalīfa, November, 1981.

4. See attitudes and Condition of khalwas under "the Mahdiyya Period", above.

roof to the eastern bank of the river.⁽¹⁾

Under the instruction of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr the telegraphic lines between Cairo and Khartoum were cut⁽²⁾ and the whole region of Berber fell to the Mahdiyya forces even about eight months before Khartoum.

Under the Condominium rule, and when conditions permitted, the khalwa was said to have been rebuilt and to have resumed its Qur'ānic teaching role under al-fakī Aḥmad Ḥusayn then a young teacher → al-Amin Aḥmad al-Shaykh who was then succeeded by al-fakī al-Amin b. Muḥammad al-Khayr.⁽³⁾

However the khalwa was never to be the same again. Like almost all of the traditional khalwas it was said to have been exposed to systematic hostile attitudes and pressure from the Government.⁽⁴⁾

In 1927 the khalwa was converted into a khalwa nizāmiyya under hereditary teacher - al-fakī 'Abd al-Mājid b. al-Amin b. Muḥammad b. Khūjalī - the father of al-Khalīfa Muḥammad (1981).⁽⁵⁾

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1. Information from the khalwa khalīfa, November, 1981.
 2. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.235.
 3. Information from al-khalīfa Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mājid, al-Ghubush, November, 1981.
 4. See above.
 5. This was the father of the khalīfa with whom the writer had the interview at al-Ghubush, 15th November, 1981.

Al-fakī 'Abd al-Mājid was given a short course on teacher training for the khalwa nizāmiyya and was paid a monthly salary of P.T.150.⁽¹⁾

Not only that but new subjects such as arithmetic, Arabic dictation and composition were added to the teaching of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

The khalwa was provided with modern teaching aids such as blackboards, chalk, slates, slate-pencils, textbooks and exercise books.⁽³⁾ It was also subject to frequent inspection from the Government administrators and, in particular, the educational authorities.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, the khalwa of al-Ghubush was brought under the Government's control.

Finally, like many of the khalwa nizāmiyya, when the Government rejected it on educational grounds, the famous four-centuries old khalwa of al-Ghubush steadily declined till by the 1960s it ceased to exist as an effective teaching centre.⁽⁵⁾

Today, the function of al-Ghubush Mosque has been reduced to the daily and Friday prayers only.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Information from the khalīfa, November, 1981.
 2. Information from al-khalīfa Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mājid, November, 1981.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. The writer's visit to the khalwa, 15th November, 1981.

From the foregoing it seems clear that the effective role of the khalwa of al-Ghubush as an educational institution was eclipsed with the end of the Turco-Egyptian era.

Under al-Mahdiyya it was totally suspended when the top priority was given to jihad against the foreign occupation and intervention.

Under the Condominium rule, however, it was systematically pressurized and finally liquidated.

The factors that contributed to this sad end seem to be exemplified in the following.

It was at the khalwa of al-Ghubush that Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Mahdī - the leader of the Mahdiyya revolution - had his 'ilm studies, under its renowned faqīh, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr.⁽¹⁾

Further, it was al-Mahdī's ex-teacher and later appointed amīr for Berber region - al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr (who was in turn a product of the famous khalwas of al-Majādhīb) who successfully led the stiff resistance against and contributed to the downfall of the Turco-Egyptian regime.

Hence, it could be assumed that it might have been an act

1. See above.

of great significance, to the alien rule, to crack down on the institutions that had given rise to the cause of al-Mahdiyya - such as al-Ghubush. It seems interesting to note, in this respect, that the other main khalwas with which al-Mahdī was associated, such as that of al-Majādhīb (indirectly, by way of his ex-teacher and through their direct and leading support to al-Mahdiyyah cause) and the khalwa of Kutranj, where he had also studied, were also broken down.⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, the main function of the khalwa of al-Ghubush, since its emergence in the middle of the 10th/16th century, had been the dissemination of Orthodox Islamic teachings as exemplified in the teaching of the Qur'ān, Qur'ānic sciences and some 'ilm courses, under its orthodox 'ulamā'. In this respect, it could be said that like the khalwas of Kutranj and those of al-Majādhīb, it had no active involvement in popular Sūfī rituals of the ṭarīqas - which were manifested, elsewhere, in the form of the erection of qubbas and shrines and the associated rituals of visitations, nudhūr, writing of amulets and 'azīma and nawba dhikr, etc.⁽²⁾

Consequently, the khalwa of al-Ghubush seems to have been lacking (again like the khalwas of al-Majādhīb and Kutranj) the spiritual attraction and the more important financial support of

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1. See the khalwa of al-Majādhīb, below, for example.
 2. The Sūfī dependent khalwas such as those of Kadabas, Abū Qurūn, UmmDawwan Bān, for example.

the Ṣufī dependent khalwas not only to survive but even to flourish to a great extent.⁽¹⁾

Hence, when under the Condominium rule, the khalwa of al-Ghubush was denied the financial aid that sustained it under the Turco-Egyptian period, it became vulnerable to the unfavourable attitude and pressure from the alien Government.⁽²⁾

As a result, it was converted to a khalwa nizāmīyya - a semi kuttāb school under the Government control. Thus the famous khalwa of al-Ghubush was eroded of its status, prestige and even its original character. Even when the Government abandoned this policy, after having exploited, discredited and discarded that institution, the khalwa of al-Ghubush could no longer regain its lost status or play its traditional educational and social roles. It gradually declined and faded out. As an educational institution it has been supplanted by the modern school.⁽³⁾

In this respect, the khalwa of al-Ghubush seems to represent a sharp contrast to the neighbouring khalwa of al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī at Kadabas, for example, which seems to have survived and even prospered through its heavy reliance on the perpetuation of the rituals of its Ṣufī tarīqa.⁽⁴⁾

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1. The Ṣufī dependent khalwas such as those of Kadabas, Abū Qurūn, UmmDawwan Bān, for example.
 2. Information from the khalwa khalīfa.
 3. The writer's visit to al-Ghubush, November 1981.
 4. See the khalwa of Kadabas, below.

B. Khalwas of al-Majādhīb at al-Dāmer

Although these khalwas are being dealt with in Part II of this study, their origin - and indeed the origin of the family - is traced back to their great ancestor al-Ḥājj 'Isā b. Qandīl of the Ja'aliyyīn tribe who was said to have lived thirteen generations ago.⁽¹⁾ As a young man he was said to have gone on pilgrimage to Mecca where he also studied 'ilm.⁽²⁾ On his return home he was said to have established his masjid and taught the Qur'ān at the village of Darrū, two kilometres south of modern al-Damer.⁽³⁾

The mosque continued to be used by the descendants of al-Ḥājj 'Isā and his successors: his son Muḥammad and then by his grandson 'Abdallāh of Darrū - known as rājil Darrū (the man of Darrū).⁽⁴⁾

However, it was at the time of the third successor al-faqīh Ḥamad b. 'Abdallāh of Darrū that an important development seems to have taken place. Al-faqīh Ḥamad, who was an ascetic, was said to have moved from his ancestors' home at Darrū to the site of modern al-Dāmer - which was then a clearing in the midst of a forest region on the right bank of the Nile - and there he established his khalwa for meditation.⁽⁵⁾ Because of his respected

1. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, 14th November, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

status as a religious man the Arab tribes, especially his own Ja'aliyyīn tribe, seem to have been attracted to his new settlement which they used to refer to as 'Damar Ḥamad' (the abode of Ḥamad) or his settlement, and hence the name al-Damer.⁽¹⁾ Afterwards the founder himself came to be known as Ḥamad al-kabīr (the Great) or Ḥamad I.⁽²⁾

Gradually, Ḥamad's settlement seems to have increased in size and to have become the focal point of attraction for the Arab nomads who found in the region a suitable grazing area (on the banks of the river, especially during the dry season) and enjoyed security and protection under its spiritual leader and above all acquired at his khalwa some badly needed religious teachings - for them and their children.⁽³⁾

The khalwa established by al-Shaykh Ḥamad continued as a teaching institution under his son and successor, al-fakī 'Alī Abū Dāmi', who was said to have been so God-fearing that he always wept whenever he read the Qur'ān or entered his khalwa for meditation.⁽⁴⁾

After Abū Dāmi' the khalwa was managed by his son al-fakī

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, 14th November 1981.
 2. Ibid.; this was so in order to distinguish him from his great-grandson Ḥamad al-Majdhūb (d.1190/1776), see below.
 3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.
 4. Ibid.

'Alī al-Dirāwī, a disciple of al-Shaykh Ahmad b. Nāsir, whom he had met in Mecca while on pilgrimage.⁽¹⁾

On his return home, al-Shaykh Ḥamad al-Majdhūb established himself as the khalīfa of the khalwa where he was said to have taught 'all the arts' and served as an expert in legal opinion and the Shari'a rules as well as instructor in the Sūfī Path to his disciples.⁽²⁾ He was also an ascetic who always read Dalā'il al-Khayrāt.⁽³⁾

Gradually, al-Shaykh Ḥamad, as a spiritual leader, grew in fame and became the most respected person in the region to the extent that his pleas and mediations to the kings and sultans and chiefs of the Ja'aliyyīn tribe on behalf of his followers were readily responded to. Not only that, but it was widely believed that whoever rejected them would immediately be stricken by his spell.⁽⁴⁾

Moreover, he was said to have acquired such an enormous prestige among the Ja'aliyyīn tribe, as a religious and secular leader, that he actually became the effective ruler over a district centering upon his residence at al-Damer.⁽⁵⁾ As a result, al-Damer

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.189; Holt and Daly, p.35.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.189.

3. Ibid.; see also "Subjects and Books" for more information on Dalā'il al-Khayrāt.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.189.

5. Holt and Daly, p.35.

Muhammad al-Majdhūb - from whom the family derived its famous name al-Majādhīb (the descendents of al-Majdhūb).⁽¹⁾

However, the reputation of the khalwa as a learning institution and indeed the reputation of the whole family for teaching, seems to have been associated with the son and successor of al-fakī Muhammad al-Majdhūb - the famous faqīh al-Shaykh Ḥamad al-Majdhūb, known also as Ḥamad II, and also as Ḥamad abū diqn (Ḥamad with the beard).⁽²⁾

Al-Shaykh Ḥamad al-Majdhūb (1105/1693 - 1190/1776)⁽³⁾ was said to have been the seventh generation after the founder of the family, al-Ḥājj 'Isā b. Qandīl.⁽⁴⁾

Ḥamad II as a young learner was taught the Qur'ān at the khalwa of al-Ghubush at the hands of al-faqīh Ḥamad b. 'Abd al-Mājid,⁽⁵⁾ and studied al-fiqh - Khalīl and al-Risāla - under al-faqīh Madanī b. Muḥammad b. Madanī al-Nāṭiq at the khalwa of Ḥamadū at Nūrī,⁽⁶⁾ and also under 'Alī al-Qarrāi. He was said to have studied theology under al-Ḥājj Sa'd [al-Karsanī] and initiated in the Sūfi Path - the Shādhiliyya Order - by al-Shaykh

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.189.

4. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.189.

6. Ibid.

was said to have flourished as an important trading centre where caravan routes from Western Sudan, Sennar, Suakin and Egypt converged,⁽¹⁾ and passed in safety from robbers under the protection of its Shaykh.⁽²⁾

However, what is of more concern to us is that al-Damer came to be considered, under al-Shaykh Ḥamad al-Majdhūb and his descendants, as the most important centre of religious teachings. Not only that but its khalwa, as an institution of learning, was described as "what might almost be called an Islamic university, the students of which were in contact with the greater and more famous schools of Cairo".⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh Ḥamad was said to have had seventeen sons (and one daughter) all of whom were engaged in teaching and learning. In support of this, his eldest son 'Abdallāh al-Naqar was said to have been, like his father, a faqīh who was so dedicated to the question of Islamic teachings that he established his own mosque and separate khalwa of study during his father's lifetime,⁽⁴⁾ which seems to have been managed by his own descendants afterwards.

In confirmation of this advanced stage of development which

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.
 2. Bruce, James, Travels to discover the source of the Nile, vol.VI, 2nd edition, p.645, Edinburgh (1805).
 3. Holt, p.198.
 4. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

al-Damer witnessed under the effective leadership of al-Majādhīb it seems relevant, in this respect, to refer to the description below and which was given by Burckhardt who visited the town in 1814, during the time of al-Shaykh Ahmad Jalāl al-Dīn b. 'Abdallāh al-Naqar - who was running an independent khalwa centre.⁽¹⁾

"Damer is a large village or town containing about five hundred houses. It is clean and much neater than Berber, having many new buildings and no ruins. The houses are built with some uniformity in regular streets and shady trees. It is inhabited by the Arab tribe of 'Medj-ydin' [al-Majādhīb] who trace their origin from Arabia."⁽²⁾

Further, in reference to the high spiritual status the members of al-Majādhīb family enjoyed amongst the people of al-Damer, under their khalīfa - al-fakī al-kabīr, Burckhardt states:

"A great part of them [the people of al-Damer] are fuqarā' or religious men. They have no [secular] Shaykh but a high pontif called al-fakī al-kabīr (the great fakī) who is the real chief who decides all matters in dispute.

The family of Medjdul [Madjdhub] in whom this office is

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, 14th November 1981.
 2. Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia, p.266.

established has the reputation of producing necromancers or persons endowed with supernatural powers from who nothing remains hidden and whose spells nothing can withstand. Innumerable stories are related of their magic powers of which the following is a specimen:

'Abdallāh, the father of the present fakī caused a lamb to bleat in the stomach of the thief who had stolen and afterwards eaten it."⁽¹⁾

The khalīfa or successor over the original khalwa of al-Shaykh Ḥamad was said to have been his son Aḥmad Abū Jadarī who was described in al-Tabaqāt as being similar to his father in 'ilm, piety and care in looking after the interests of the Muslims.⁽²⁾

Al-khalīfa Aḥmad Abū Jadarī continued in charge of his khalwa and was said to have been succeeded by his son Muḥammad Abū Surra in whose time the Turco-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan (1821) took place.⁽³⁾

It seems desirable at this stage to give a brief description of the khalwa complex of al-Majādhīb, at al-Damer, which was in use for centuries.

1. Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia, pp.266-8.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.189.

3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

The masīd which still stands⁽¹⁾, though partly in ruins, is a spacious courtyard. In the centre and nearer to the eastern side lies a low mud-built room now partly sunk in sand, with its thick wooden door closed. This was said to have been the khalwa of the khalīfa of al-Majādhīb khalwas - al-fakī al-kabīr, as Burckhardt called him in 1814.

To the east of the khalīfa's khalwa, and separated by a low mud wall, lies the prayer mosque, now newly rebuilt of red brick with a high minaret, well carpeted and supplied with electric neon light.⁽²⁾

On the southern and western sides of the masīd are five very large rooms or halls. These were used as the khalwas of study. Three of them were used as khalwas for teaching the Qur'ān - hence were called the Qur'āniyya khalwas.⁽³⁾

They had large entrances and window openings - but without

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1. The writer visited the khalwas of al-Majādhīb at al-Damer on 14th-15th November 1981, and was kindly shown the different parts of the masīd by his well-informed host, the learned man ustādh Majdhūb al-Naqar to whom he is indebted for much of the valuable information on al-Majādhīb's khalwas; Masīd is a corruption of the word masjīd; it also refers to the open space around the khalwa, or the whole khalwa complex.
 2. The writer's visit to the khalwas of al-Majādhīb, al-Damer, 14-15th November 1981.
 3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

doors or windows. Thus they were all the time open and accessible to the learners. They have high roofs and very thick mud walls - about 3/4 metre. Each accommodated about a hundred learners.⁽¹⁾

The Qur'āniyya khalwas were said to have had no furniture; the learners sat on the soft sand-covered floors, while the fakī sat on his farwa (prayer sheep-skin mat).⁽²⁾

However, each learner was provided with a lawh and he would prepare his own ink-pot and reed pens. It should be noted here that al-miḥāya of lawhs (washing off) was done on a large curved stone placed in the centre of the courtyard. Each khalwa had shelves into the walls called mishkāṭ for storing books and lawhs.⁽³⁾

The other two connected rooms were said to have been used for the teaching of 'ilm by the advanced students.⁽⁴⁾ The floors here were said to have been covered with burūsh (long rolls of prayer mats made of date-palm leaves), while the teacher - the fakī - sat on his prayer mat. Books and lawhs were stored in the mishkāṭ.⁽⁵⁾

Along the northern side of the spacious masīd are smaller rooms, though varying in size. These were said to have been used

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. The writer's visit to the khalwa. These are discussed in detail in Part III.

4. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

5. Ibid.

as khalwas of residence for the learners who were also provided with beds.⁽¹⁾

While up to ten young learners could share a room, only two or three of the advanced students of 'ilm shared one, and often a senior student who was practising Ṣūfī rituals would be provided with a separate room, and unlike the khalwas of study, these khalwas of accommodation had doors.⁽²⁾

The khalwa was said to have provided three stages of study - for the Qur'ān, 'ilm and Ṣūfism.⁽³⁾ Stage I was restricted to the teaching of the Qur'ān and the ability to read and write - at the Qur'āniyya khalwa. Stage II was for the teaching of 'ilm:⁽⁴⁾ fiqh, hadīth, tafsīr and Arabic grammar.

It was said, in this respect, that the halqas of 'ilm were also open for members of the public to attend, with the students, and to ask questions which were answered by the faqīh.

Stage III was restricted to those who had completed their study of the other two stages and sought instruction on Ṣūfism, usually conducted by the khalīfa.

It seems worth noting here that the Majādhīb were not

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

propagators of popular Ṣūfism - i.e., communal dhikr activities at the beats of the nawba (drums) as other followers of Ṣūfī Orders did, such as the Qādirīyya, for example. Their Shādhiliyya ṭarīqa advocated personal meditation, it was said, and hence they did not approve of mass dhikr and had no Ṣūfī followers from the masses.⁽¹⁾

The teachers of the three stages were usually qualified members of the same family who taught voluntarily without salary or endowment. However, like the hundreds of students, they used (together with their families) to live at the expense of the khalwa.⁽²⁾

In reference to the spread of the educational services of the Majādhīb family of fuqarā' (religious teachers), through their khalwas, Burckhardt observes that they used to extend their teaching services beyond the land of the Ja'aliyyīn - their region - to other regions such as those of Sukot and Mahas in the land of the Nubians to the north:

"The few Nubians who know how to write and who serve the governors in the capacity of secretaries are taught by the fuqarā' of al-Damer who are all learned men and travel occasionally to Cairo to visit the mosque of al-Azhar.

Many of the children of Sukot and Mahas are likewise

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

2. Ibid.

sent to the school of the Arab Shaykhs, where they remain for ten years and upwards, and are fed and taught gratuitously by the 'ulamā'."⁽¹⁾

It should be pointed out that, unlike most of the religious teachers who ran khalwas and used to depend almost entirely on the help and donations of their followers in the upkeep of their families and their khalwas, the Majādhīb teachers were said to have depended, mainly, on themselves, thus refraining from accepting sadaqāt, such as zakāt or nudhūr (alms).⁽²⁾

This independent attitude of self support seems to be confirmed by al-Tabaqāt which, in reference to Shaykh Ḥamad II states that, "despite his high social status as a teacher and a great spiritual leader, he used to work as a carpenter, making his own water wheels"⁽³⁾, thus earning his living and maintaining his dependents - including the numerous learners living at his khalwa.

It is interesting to notice that this same practice of self-reliance and self-support was transferred by al-Majādhīb religious teachers, later, when dispersed by the Turco-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan in 1821, to the new regions of their

1. Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 518.

2. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.115 see also "The Financial Aspect of Khalwa Education", below.

settlements - such as al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq.⁽¹⁾

The main reason behind this stand was said to have been based on a Sharī'a fatwa (Islamic legal opinion). As 'ulamā' and custodian of Sharī'a in their region, al-Majādhīb were said to have always adhered to the teachings of Sharī'a they preached.⁽²⁾

Hence, they looked into the financial status of the members of their family, especially the khalīfa in charge of the khalwa complex, and were said to have found out that they could support themselves, and those who depended on them, from their own earnings - their prosperous trade, extensive cultivation, wealth of animals and abundant labour in terms of followers and slaves.⁽³⁾ Consequently, according to the Sharī'a law they were said to have declared that they were not among the eight categories specified by the Qur'ān as entitled to receive sadaqāt.⁽⁴⁾ Accordingly, it has been al-Majādhīb tradition not to claim or accept zakāt, nudhur or even gifts for teaching and maintaining their students.⁽⁵⁾

That tradition seems to have been perpetuated by their

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1. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Azraq, khalīfa of the khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq, 28th November 1981.
 2. Ibid.; see "The financial aspect of khalwa education", below.
 3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981; and from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq, al-Ṣūfī, November 1981.
 4. Qur'ān, sūra 9, verse 60.
 5. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

descendants up to the present time;⁽¹⁾ thus representing a sharp contrast to the practices of Sūfī-supported khalwas.⁽²⁾

Besides teaching and the upkeep of students, the khalwa of al-Majādhīb played other important functions, too.

Because of the situation of the town of al-Damer as a meeting place for caravan routes (which were the means of transport at the time) a great number of travellers used to frequent it.⁽³⁾ But since the Sudan at that time had no hotels, rest houses, inns or restaurants to hire their services, the mosque was the usual place to which guests resorted, to meet people who would provide them with lodging and food.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, the khalwa of al-Majādhīb, like most of the main khalwas, used to have special khalwas for guests where they rested and were provided with food for themselves and their animals.⁽⁵⁾ They might even stay for several weeks till the next caravan came.⁽⁶⁾

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1. As exemplified by the khalwa of al-Sūfī al-Azraq, Gadarif - see "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.
 2. See the khalwas of Kadabas, UmmDawwan Bān, for example.
 3. See Holt and Daly, p.10; information from al-Naqar.
 4. Information from al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.
 5. Ibid.; see khalwa students, below, for khalwas of accommodation.
 6. Ibid.

As the religious leaders and 'ulamā' of the region, the Majādhīb Shaykhs were approached for legal fatwas (legal opinions) and settlement of disputes.⁽¹⁾ Hence the khalwa acquired the additional role of a Shari'a Court and its decisions were always said to have been received with approval from the masses.⁽²⁾

Further, their khalwa served also as what might be called today a documentation or registration bureau. Individuals and groups came to the khalwa for certification of marriages, inheritance, transactions, and so on, which the fuqahā' of the khalwa would prepare according to the Shari'a rules and even keep them, or their copies, at the request of the parties concerned.⁽³⁾

The khalwa also was said to have served as the safest place where people would hand in their valuables, jewellery, money and so on, to the khalwa Shaykhs to be kept for them - serving as a bank.⁽⁴⁾

In addition, the khalwa was also said to have served as the most suitable place for parents to keep their young children when, for any reason, they had to be away from home - they would be looked after by the khalīfa's household and servants.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

Perhaps a more important role of the khalwa of al-Majādhīb was that it served as the religious and social community centre for the people of al-Damer at that time.⁽¹⁾ They met there to discuss public problems, for ceremonies such as weddings or religious festivals and for condolences, in the event of death. At any rate, the people of al-Damer were said to have been freely availing themselves of the huge facilities of the khalwa - space, furniture, food and other services - without interrupting the normal life and activities of the khalwa.⁽²⁾

The overall administration of the khalwa - as in similar khalwa centres - was the responsibility of the khalīfa in charge. It was usually entrusted to him through a hereditary system - that is, handed down from father to son by way of descent which seems to have been the universal practice of almost all Sūfī khalwas.⁽³⁾ It seems also to be based on the belief that the baraka of the Sūfī Shaykh could be inherited by his descendants - especially his nominee for the post of Shaykh al-sajjāda (prayer carpet). Moreover, the khalwa, as a private voluntary enterprise - unlike the mosque which is a public institution by its nature as bayt Allāh - could be inherited.⁽⁴⁾

The Turco-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan by Ismā'īl Pasha b.

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

Muhammad 'Alī Pāsha in 1821 was a turning point in the history of al-Majādhīb's khalwas of al-Damer. It seems to have marked the steady decline of these khalwas and indeed of the whole family from the peak status they occupied during the latter part of the Funj rule in the 18th century.⁽¹⁾

From the start al-Majādhīb, as custodians of Sharī'a, as well as effective leaders in their region, were said to have stood firmly in opposition to the foreign invasion.⁽²⁾ Hence they seem to have aligned themselves with their kinsmen, the kings of the Ja'aliyyīn and with the Funj sultans. But what is significant in this respect was that al-Majādhīb were said to have backed their opposition by a legal fatwa that advocated that the Turco-Egyptian rule was not based on Sharī'a Law, as it ought to have been, but on an imposed secular law - al-qānūn.⁽³⁾ Hence, the necessity of resisting it.

Thus the khalwa of al-Majādhīb under its strong spiritual leaders seems to have taken a religio-political stand against the invaders.

1. Holt and Daly, pp.34-5.

2. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

This seems to have been in reference to the heavy taxation system following the occupation and the deposing of the traditional rulers. See the "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

The result of this opposition, however, was catastrophic to both the khalwa and the region.⁽¹⁾

The champion of the invasion, Ismā'īl Pasha, was reported to have been killed by al-Majādhīb's kinsmen, the kings of the tribe of al-Ja'aliyyīn at Shendi, on his way back to Cairo.⁽²⁾ In revenge the whole riverain region was devastated by the punitive campaigns of Muhammad 'Alī's son-in-law, al-Difterdar.⁽³⁾

Like other towns and khalwas of the region, al-Damer and the khalwa centre of al-Majādhīb were destroyed, and their lands and property confiscated.⁽⁴⁾ The surviving members of the family had to abandon their homeland and flee for their lives to the remote regions of eastern Sudan and to Ethiopia.⁽⁵⁾

However, being dedicated religious teachers, although al-Majādhīb were forced temporarily to abandon their traditional seat of learning at al-Damer, yet they were never known to have abandoned their traditional mission - the dissemination of Islamic teachings wherever they settled, across the vast region of eastern Sudan, between the Nile and the Ethiopian borders, and amongst

1. See "Attitudes and condition of khalwas under the Turco-Egyptian rule", above.

2. Holt and Daly, p.55; (Shendi was the capital of the Ja'aliyyīn kings

3. MacMichael, vol.II, p.388.

4. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

5. MacMichael, vol.II, pp.391-2.

the hitherto almost ignorant Beja and other nomadic tribes.⁽¹⁾

To substantiate the above, reference could be made to the following khalwas that were established by members of the religious Majādhīb family who had to abandon the lands of their ancestors as a result of the Turco-Egyptian invasion:

The khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq, at al-Gadaref, established by al-fakī Muḥammad al-Azraq b. al-fakī Aḥmad Abū Jadarī b. Ḥamad al-Majdhūb.⁽²⁾

The khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Makkī, established by al-fakī al-Makkī al-Azraq.

The khalwa (or zāwiya) of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Majdhūb b. al-Shaykh Qamar al-Dīn b. Ḥamad al-Majdhūb, established at Suākin port on the Red Sea.

The khalwas of al-fakī 'Abdallāh al-Naqar, established at Kasala and Berber.

The khalwas of al-fakī 'Abdallāh b. Madani, and his sons, at Tokar and Erkawīt in Eastern Sudan.

Further, the graduates of these khalwas were said to have carried on the message of al-Majādhīb by establishing new khalwas in their home districts, in Eastern Sudan.⁽³⁾

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

2. This khalwa at al-Gadaref town, near the Ethiopian border, is still functioning and on the same lines of its mother khalwa, though on a very limited scale (the writer's visit, to this khalwa, November, 1981).

3. Ibid.

For further information on al-Majādhīb new extension of khalwas, the khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq at al-Gadaref has been elaborated on.⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, when the turmoil of the first years of the Turco-Egyptian occupation subsided and the new rule was effectively established, all the people of the region were said to have been pardoned and encouraged to return to their home districts.⁽²⁾

Accordingly, many of al-Majādhīb family of teachers were said to have returned to their town. They had some of their confiscated land and property returned and they joined hands to rebuild and renovate and revive their khalwas.⁽³⁾

As alluded to before, the Turco-Egyptian administration did not interfere in the internal functioning of the traditional khalwas.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, the fuqarā' of al-Majādhīb, like other khalwa Shaykhs, were said to have resumed their traditional khalwa teachings - thus preserving the inherited patterns and practices of the khalwa.

However, al-Majādhīb now much reduced in power, economic

1. See below.

2. Shuqayr, vol.III, p.120.

3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

4. See "Attitudes and condition of khalwas under the Turco-Egyptian rule", above.

prosperity, prestige and spiritual influence, were said to have been simmering with bitterness and discontent towards an imposed, corrupt and non-Sharī'a based foreign rule.⁽¹⁾ But, being as weak as they were, they had to live with the regime they resented till the time of salvation came.

Hence, when the Mahdiyya revolution broke out al-Majādhīb fuqarā' were said to have been among the first people to pledge their support to the call of its leader.⁽²⁾ They were said to have found themselves in full agreement with the call of al-Mahdī for jihād (holy war) against the corrupt Turco-Egyptian administration.⁽³⁾ They were in particular supportive of al-Mahdī's call for the revival of Orthodox Islam and the implementation of the Sharī'a law which they had been teaching and were regarded as custodian of their region.⁽⁴⁾

Moreover, they seem to have found in the call for jihād against the Turco-Egyptian regime their long awaited chance of revenge for their martyrs who fell in the battles of resistance against the invasion, and for the subsequent atrocities inflicted upon their holy religious centre as against almost all the khalwas of the time in the riverain region and the dispersal of their family that followed.

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Their moral, political and military contribution was said to have been vital for the success of al-Mahdiyya revolution in particular in Northern and Eastern Sudan and during its early stage. It was also claimed to have been a crucial factor in the fall of Khartoum.⁽¹⁾ Al-Majādhīb role was exemplified in the following: They paid homage to al-Mahdī's appointed chief amīr over the province of Berber - his ex-teacher at the khalwa of al-Ghubush, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr.⁽²⁾ Their spiritual and moral support was said to have given a great boost to the Mahdiyya cause at this early stage.

Further, al-Majādhīb were said to have declared civil disobedience against the Turco-Egyptian administration at al-Damer, and to have cut the telegraph line from Egypt.⁽³⁾ Not only that, but it was said that four of the amīrs of the region were from al-Damer and three of these were from al-Majādhīb: al-fakī Muḥammad b. al-fakī Aḥmad b. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Majdhūb, al-Amīn b. Aḥmad al-Majdhūb, and al-Ṭayyib Muḥammad al-Majdhūb.⁽⁴⁾

In addition to the above, al-Majādhīb's indirect contribution to the success of the Mahdiyya revolution was no less crucial.

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr - the ex-teacher of al-Mahdī at

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.
 2. See the "Mahdiyya Period", above.
 3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.
 4. Ibid.

the khalwa of al-Ghubush and now the chief Mahdiyya amīr of the region - was the product of their khalwas: at al-Damer, where he had learnt the Qur'ān and at their branch khalwa of al-Sūfi al-Azraq (al Gadaref) where he studied fiqh.⁽¹⁾

The fall of Eastern Sudan into the hands of the Mahdiyya's amīr, 'Uthmān Dīqna, has been attributed to the crucial support of the latter's teacher - al-Shaykh al-Tāhir b. al-Shaykh al-Tayyib b. Qamar al-Dīn al-Majdhūb, for the call of the Mahdiyya .

Under the short-lived period of the Mahdiyya the top priority was reported to have been given to jihād for the protection and consolidation of the newly established Shari'a based rule.⁽²⁾

Although after the premature death of al-Mahdī (only six months after the fall of Khartoum) the Sudan came to be ruled by al-Khalīfa 'Abdullāhi who was not inclined towards the religious leaders and the 'ulamā'⁽³⁾ and against whom many revolts were directed - such as that of al-Ja'aliyyīn - al-Majādhīb were said to have remained loyal to the Mahdiyya cause and to its leader in power.⁽⁴⁾

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

2. See "The Mahdiyya Period", above.

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.101.

4. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

They were reported to have issued a fatwa supporting al-khalīfa as head of the Muslim state and denouncing as illegal any revolt against him, or rendering help to the invading Anglo-Egyptian forces under the non-Muslim Kitchener.⁽¹⁾

However, this relentless religio-political stand of the khalwa of al-Majādhīb against the foreign invasion and occupation was said to have cost al-Majādhīb dearly in terms of life, property, influence and eventually the cause of their existence and their high reputation.⁽²⁾

In the war of resistance against the Anglo-Egyptian forces which overthrew the Mahdiyya regime and then established the Condominium regime, many of the members of al-Majādhīb family were said to have fallen in the battlefield and many more imprisoned. When al-Damer was seized, its amīr was said to have been arrested and shot in front of the crowds of his own people.⁽³⁾ To further punish al-Majādhīb for their support to al-khalīfa and their stubborn resistance to the invading forces their lands were confiscated.⁽⁴⁾

Further, it was said that in order to put al-Damer - the traditional centre of influence of al-Majādhīb - under control,

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

it was made, under the Condominium rule, the provincial capital of the region instead of Berber.⁽¹⁾

Not only that but under the new rule the khalwa of al-Majādhīb - the source of all their spiritual and secular power - like almost all other khalwas, was exposed to hostile attitude and pressure from the government. A systematic policy for its gradual liquidation seems to have been set and executed to the letter.

A rival and parallel modern kuttāb school was created at al-Damer and members of al-Majādhīb family were forced to send their children to join it so as to set the example to their followers - the people of al-Damer to follow. Majdhūb b. Jalāl al-Dīn, a child of ten years of age who had already learnt the Qur'ān, at the time, and al-Ṭayyib (the father of Professor 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib) were the first children to be sent to that government school.⁽²⁾

Although the new kuttāb school was encouraged and given favourable treatment at the expense of the khalwa which was unfairly discredited, the latter continued to function under extremely difficult conditions. It was made practically difficult for children whose parents desired them to continue their khalwa

1. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, 14th November 1981.

2. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

education, while attending the imposed modern kuttāb, to reconcile study at both institutions; hence they had to give up their study at the khalwa, to the advantage of the school.⁽¹⁾

Then the khalwa of al-Majādhīb itself was directly attacked. It was forced by the Government's administrators and educational authorities to be converted into a khalwa nizāmiyya - organized or modernized khalwa.⁽²⁾ Accordingly new secular subjects such as arithmetic and Arabic (especially Arabic dictation and composition and readers) were introduced and the kuttāb school text books, such as al-‘Arabīyya al-Mahbūba were added to the traditional khalwa curriculum centred on the Qur’ān.⁽³⁾ Trained teachers were also said to have been provided to teach these new subjects at the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

Not only that, but the khalwa was supplied with modern teaching aids: blackboards, chalk, counting boards, exercise books, slates and so on.⁽⁵⁾

The khalwa nizāmiyya was frequently visited by the British educational inspectors to check on its progress according to the prescribed lines.⁽⁶⁾

1. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

In effect, the traditional Majādhīb khalwa was converted to a semi-school. In fact, its graduates were selected to feed the second form of the kuttāb school - i.e., the khalwa was used as a substitute for the first year form.⁽¹⁾

However, in the 1930s, the educational authorities were reported to have abandoned their previous policy of feeding the second year kuttāb school with khalwa graduates.⁽²⁾ The experiment was claimed to have been an educational failure, and the khalwa was accused of teaching the children the bad habit of rote learning, which was said to have been transferred to the school through its khalwa pupils.⁽³⁾ Consequently, the khalwa was discarded and admission to the kuttāb school was made directly from the school-age children who had no khalwa experience.⁽⁴⁾

To discourage children from joining al-Majādhīb khalwa, the Government's educational authorities were said to have adopted a more hostile policy towards it. It was propagated that the khalwa was a waste of time and effort and would result in the retardation of the child's aptitude and readiness for modern school education. Accordingly, the parents were warned against

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar. See the Period of the Condominium - especially the khalwa nizāmiyya above.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

sending their children to the khalwa.⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, to encourage more and more parents at al-Damer to send their children to school instead of the khalwa, Government paid jobs were restricted to the school-leavers, and were especially guaranteed to those who opted for higher education and graduated from Gordon's College.⁽²⁾

Gradually the people of al-Damer were induced to switch their children from the khalwa to the modern kuttāb school. Even the children of al-Majādhīb family were said to have been increasingly sent to the modern school and to have taken Government jobs.⁽³⁾ This became more evident towards the end of the Condominium rule when more job opportunities became available for the educated Sudanese - through the localization of posts previously held by foreigners - i.e., "Sudanization" of Government posts on the eve of Independence.⁽⁴⁾

Other factors seem to have contributed to the fading out process of al-Majādhīb khalwa. The main, or indeed the only function which justified the existence of al-Majādhīb khalwa was the dissemination of religious knowledge. In this respect the

1. Interview with ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

khalwas of al-Majādhīb differed from many of the main traditional khalwas which were equally, or even more, concerned with the propagation of the Sūfī tariqas than with religious education, such as those of Kadabas, UmmDawwan Bān, Abū Qurūn. Hence, when al-Majādhīb khalwa was denied its legitimate educational role it faded out.

On the other hand, the khalwa's involvement in political opposition, based on solid religious grounds, seems to have made it the target of hostility of the ruling foreign circles.⁽¹⁾

The financial constraint was also an important factor contributing to the sad end of the once famous khalwa. As alluded to before, al-Majādhīb were known to have always relied on their personal financial resources earned through their wide trade and extensive cultivation. Now, under a hostile alien rule they seem to have lost both sources. They lost favour with the alien regimes, and they were not in a position to compete with the modern trading companies centred in Khartoum and conducting their trade through a modern network of communications. Moreover, much of their cultivation land was confiscated.

On the other hand, because al-Majādhīb were essentially 'ulamā' - and not active propagators of Sūfī tariqas who used to exercise popular mass rituals, such as nawba dhikr, saint cult and

1. See their resistance to the Turco-Egyptian and the Condominium rules and their alignment with the Mahdiyya rule, above.

visitations of the saint's shrines - they seem to have had no spiritual devotees or followers to defend them against the Government's hostile policy towards the khalwas, and to support them financially when their own traditional resources dried up.⁽¹⁾

At any rate, they were said to have lost their spiritual and secular influence and their role as great teachers. Hence, the centuries long and famous tuqqāba of the khalwa of al-Majādhīb at al-Damer was extinguished.

Today the role of al-Majādhīb's mosque has been restricted to prayer only.⁽²⁾

However, some of al-Majādhīb's branch khalwas which were established by members of the family in Eastern Sudan - when they were forced, as a result of the Turco-Egyptian invasion of the country in 1821 to leave their original home at al-Damer - are still functioning and on the same traditional lines of the mother khalwa at al-Damer.

The living example of these Majādhīb khalwas, though on a humble scale, is that of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq at al-Qadārff.⁽³⁾

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1. Cf. the khalwas of Kadabas and UmḥDawwan Ban.
 2. The writer's visit to the khalwa, 14-15th November 1981.
 3. The writer's visit to the khalwa, 28-29th November 1981.

C. The Khalwa Centre of Wad al-Fādnī

Another example of the famous khalwa centres of the riverain region today, is that of Wad al-Fādnī - Gezira region.⁽¹⁾

The khalwa was said to have been established by al-fakī 'Alī b. al-Fādnī, whose original home was said to have been near al-'Ayadak - near modern Wad Rāwā town.⁽²⁾

As a young learner 'Alī b. al-Fādnī was reported to have studied at Kutrānj under al-fakī Wad Mudawwī (Madani?) and al-Shanbātī (?)⁽³⁾, perhaps at the beginning of the 12th/18th century.⁽⁴⁾

On completion of his studies, al-fakī 'Alī was said to have settled at the site of the present village that bears his name - Wad al-Fādnī.⁽⁵⁾

There, like most fugara or teachers of the Qur'ān of the time, he established a humble khalwa for teaching the Qur'ān and gradually the Arab nomads were said to have settled around

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1. The khalwa is at the village of Wad al-Fādnī, south of al-Ḥaṣāḥīṣa, Northern Gezira.
 2. Wad Rāwā lies on the eastern bank of the Blue Nile, opposite to al-Kāmlīn town.
 3. Interview with al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ, December, 1981.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

it, and a village came into being.⁽¹⁾

The administrative and teaching functions were shouldered by the founder and seem to have been inherited by his descendants afterwards. Al-fakī 'Alī and his descendants, like almost all the khalwa teachers of the time, were Sūfī Shaykhs - though at a moderate level.⁽²⁾

The post of the khalwa's khalīfa (the successor in charge) has been retained within the family, from father to son - by descent.⁽³⁾ Thus, al-fakī 'Alī, the founder, was succeeded by his son al-fakī Muḥammad, and the latter by his son al-fakī 'Alī who, in turn, was succeeded by his son al-fakī al-Nadhīr.⁽⁴⁾ Al-fakī al-Nadhīr was succeeded at first by his son, al-khalīfa Muḥammad, who was succeeded by his brother al-fakī Ḥamad al-Nīl and the latter has been succeeded by his son, al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ, Shaykh of the khalwa of Wād al-Fādnī in 1981.⁽⁵⁾

The main function of the khalwa was said to have always been the teaching of the Qur'ān - together with reading and writing.⁽⁶⁾ Other subjects, such as elementary fiqh, tafsīr

1. Interview with al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ, December, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

and hadīth were said to have been taught - though not on a permanent basis.⁽¹⁾

In the past the khalwa, like the village around it, was built of local material - straw, thatch, wooden pillars and thorny branches in the form of a large "Quttiyya" (a conical-shaped hut), surrounded by a spacious thorn enclosure.⁽²⁾

The contents of the khalwa - like all other khalwas - have always been humble, simple and minimum; the floor was covered with rolls of birūsh (mats made out of date-palm tree leaves) for the students to sit on; the fakī's prayer's skin-mat; the ablution "abārīq" or jugs; and the wooden lawhs and straw pens, and ink-pots of the learners.⁽³⁾ In the centre was the smoky fire-place, around which the learners sat for study when they had to be inside the khalwa room.⁽⁴⁾

However, most of the study time was always spent in the spacious courtyard of the khalwa, under the trees by day-time, and around the big wood fire flame (the tuqqaba) around which the students sat for study in the cool nights.⁽⁵⁾

1. Interview with al-khalifa al-Rayyah.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

The students, who came from the surrounding region, lived in khalwas of accommodation - built of the same local material - qatātī, which were erected around the khalwa of study.⁽¹⁾ They all lived at the expense of the khalwa Shaykh, but they assisted him in such matters as fetching fire-wood, water from the river and keeping the premises clean,⁽²⁾ and as 'urafā' (heads of junior halqas).⁽³⁾

Today, in contrast to the khalwa structure of the past an impressive improvement has taken place in the physical form.

In line with the trend of general khalwa revival all over the country under National rule,⁽⁴⁾ the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī, especially under the administration of Shaykh al-Rayyāḥ, seems to have been undergoing a great and unprecedented material development. Thanks to the generous donations,⁽⁵⁾ the khalwa has been receiving mainly from individuals - men of charity, such as the businessman 'Īsā al-Masarra, and from the Government, the following could be mentioned as an embodiment of that material change.

1. Interview with al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. See National Period, above.

5. See "The financial aspect of education", below.

Most of the buildings of the masīd have undergone a steady and gradual change from being built of wood, straw and surrounded with thorn enclosure,⁽¹⁾ to brick and concrete built white-washed premises.⁽²⁾

The khalwa complex itself has been enormously expanded. Now it comprises the main khalwa of study, rebuilt out of brick, in the form of a spacious hall with verandahs on both sides.⁽³⁾ Its floors were covered with fine sand, and had no furniture other than pieces of individuals' prayer mats.⁽⁴⁾ The khalwa had a small platform at the rear meant for placing the learners lawhs (when not in use) out of reverence to the sacred material copied on these lawhs.

Beside the khalwa stands a modern newly rebuilt mosque with a high minaret, for the five daily prayers and the Friday prayer.⁽⁵⁾

Near the mosque a large and well carpeted room has been built to serve as the khalīfa's personal reception khalwa.⁽⁶⁾

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1. See reference to the original khalwa buildings in the past.
 2. Personal observations of the writer, on his visit to the khalwa.
 3. Observations of the writer.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.

Adjacent to all this, but separated by a wall, a modern well-furnished guest house has also been built - consisting of three sections, - a large separate room with beds on one side, a wire net verandah with about ten beds on the opposite side and a magnificent well-furnished saloon with a verandah in the middle, for the reception of notables.⁽¹⁾ The guest house has been provided with electric neon light, ceiling fans, water coolers, bathrooms, and seems to have been kept always tidy and clean.⁽²⁾

The students used to live in mud built khalwas on the sides of the walls around the khalwa of study.⁽³⁾ Now new modern khalwas have been built as an act of charity by the businessman - 'Īsā al-Masarra,⁽⁴⁾ on a spacious piece of land adjacent to the khalwa.⁽⁵⁾ These khalwas of accommodation consist of four large blocks with their verandahs - each block consisting of five dormitories (with the capacity for accommodating twenty learners each);⁽⁶⁾ locally-made beds were provided also.⁽⁷⁾

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1. Observations of the writer on his visit to the khalwa.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Interview with al-khalīfa, al-Rayyah.
 5. Observations of the writer on his visit to the khalwa.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Information from al-khalīfa al-Rayyah.

The khalwa premises have been provided with tap-water and electricity.⁽¹⁾

In addition to the above the khalwa has its own flour mill.⁽²⁾

Furthermore, the khalwa has been providing its large student population, that ranged between 700 - 1,000, with food for free - three meals a day⁽³⁾: while the young children and the blind were provided with ready made food, normal students were provided with flour to cook their own meals, in addition to ready made mulāh,⁽⁴⁾ and tea and sugar.⁽⁵⁾

Not only that but needy students were provided with clothes that were usually donated to the khalwa.⁽⁶⁾

Teachers, too, were provided with three meals a day, and with tea twice a day.⁽⁷⁾

It is these impressive material changes and relatively abundant and easy living conditions which have contributed in

-
1. Observations of the writer.
 2. Information from the khalwa khalīfa.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Mulāh refers to the dish of meat and vegetables (both fresh or dried) which are eaten with bread.
 5. Information from al-khalīfa al-Rayyāh.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.

making the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī most attractive to students coming from distant and less advantaged regions such as those of Western Sudan.

On the administrative aspect al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ was reported to have been assisted by his brothers and the senior students.⁽¹⁾ In this respect, he had deputies for such matters as expenditure and provision of rations to the ḥayrān, for guests affairs and for personal services.⁽²⁾

Like many shaykhs of the main khalwa centres the khalīfa does not engage in teaching.⁽³⁾ Hence this task at the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī in 1981 was assigned to four experienced fakīs (or deputies, in charge of teaching), who had graduated from the same khalwa. These were:⁽⁴⁾

Al-fakī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan Ḥarrān, al-fakī 'Umar 'Abd al-Raḥmān, al-fakī Aḥmad 'Abd al-Muṭṭalīb and al-fakī al-Nūr Idrīs.

The khalwa 'urafā' (junior shaykhs of halqas),

Under these were a number of 'urafā' or assistant Shaykhs of

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1. Interview with al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ at Wad al-Fādnī.
 2. Ibid.
 3. See for example the khalwa centres of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba and Hamishkorayb.
 4. Interview with these fakīs.

halqas. Of these the writer's attention was drawn by four:
al-Day 'Alī Ṣāliḥ, who was only ten years old, and had already
learnt the Qur'ān by heart.⁽¹⁾ Al-Day had started learning the
Qur'ān at his own village, near Bara in Kordufan, and was seven
years of age when he was brought to this khalwa by his elder
brother, who had been then a senior student at the khalwa.⁽²⁾
Within only a three year period al-Day was reported to have
thoroughly learnt the Qur'ān by heart at the age of ten.⁽³⁾
In 1981 he was confidently and ably chairing a halqa of about
twenty learners, of varying standards from his own region, studying
the Qur'ān, at the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

The second junior teacher was Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, a youth
of sixteen from Western Sudan, who had also learnt the Qur'ān
by heart at the khalwa, and was in charge of a junior halqa
of learners of the Qur'ān.⁽⁵⁾

The third assistant fakī was al-Ṭayyib Muḥammad Ḥammād, a
boy of fifteen, from Western Sudan, who had started learning the
Qur'ān at his home district and had now completed learning the
Qur'ān and was engaged in supervising a halqa of learners.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Interview with the junior Shaykh, al-Day, at his halqa.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Interview with the junior Shaykh, Ṣāliḥ M. Ṣāliḥ.
 6. Interview with the junior Shaykh al-Ṭayyib Muḥammad Ḥammād.

The fourth assistant fakī was a blind young man called Amīr who had already graduated from the khalwa and joined Sharwani⁽¹⁾ Institute for Qur'ānic Readings in Khartoum. Every year, during the Institute's vacation, Amīr used to come to his old khalwa to volunteer as a Shaykh of a halqa.⁽²⁾ He became so experienced that he could chair a halqa of about forty students of different standards⁽³⁾ to dictate.⁽⁴⁾

Today, as could be realized from the above, the main function of the khalwa has been restricted to teaching the Qur'ān, in addition to reading and writing.⁽⁵⁾ In this respect, the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī has come to be regarded as one of the top khalwas in the Sudan.⁽⁶⁾ Many of its students succeeded in the annual Qur'ānic competitions, while many of its graduates joined the higher religious institutions of learning - such as Sharwani.⁽⁷⁾

It should be added, here, also that since the mid 1970s the khalwa has been granting ijāza (certificate) to those who had successfully completed learning the Qur'ān, and that such an ijāza was said to have been recognized not only all over the

-
1. Interview with the halqa Shaykh, Amīr.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See "methods" below for description of al-ramya.
 5. Interview with al-khalīfa al-Rayyah.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.

Sudan but even abroad - in countries like Egypt and Sa'ūdi Arabia.⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless it has been reported that in matters of content, methods of teaching and techniques, teachers training, daily programmes and administrative procedures, the khalwa does not seem to have experienced any significant change but rather was said to have been following its traditional practices for generations.⁽²⁾

Hence, while the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī seems to have witnessed impressive material renovations, it does not seem to have undergone any substantial improvement in substance, i.e., in what is taught.

1. Information from al-khalīfa al-Rayyah.

2. Ibid.

D. The Khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān (*Umm Dubbān*)⁽¹⁾

This khalwa represents another example of the famous present-day khalwa centres of Northern and Central Sudan.

The founder of the khalwa was al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Ubayd b. Badr, who was born in 1226/1811 at al-Qoz al-Hawwāra, west of Shendi.⁽²⁾ His father, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Badr, was from the Masallamiyyah tribe, while his mother, Rayya bint Abū Zayd, was from the Ḥassāniyya.⁽³⁾

As a young learner Muḥammad al-‘Ubayd was said to have studied the Qur’ān at the khalwa of Kutranj⁽⁴⁾, at the hands of al-fakī Aḥmad b. ‘Isā al-Ansārī (d.1239)⁽⁵⁾. He was then

1. Umm Dawwan Bān means the place whose light has appeared.

The source of the light was the huge wood fire (the tuqqāba) in the spacious courtyard of the khalwa, and around which the students sat for study. When people used to travel by camel caravans by night and stop at the khalwa centres for rest, security, food and baraka, the light of the tuqqāba at the khalwa would indicate the khalwa of the Shaykh al-‘Ubayd and village. (The Information Committee, 100th anniversary of the death of al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd, 1402/1981) - previously known as *Umm Dubbān*.

2. Qalā’id, p.3.

3. Ibid.

4. See above, for the khalwa Kutranj and branches.

5. Irshād, p.66.

initiated in the Qādiriyya tarīqa by al-Shaykh Ahmad 'Awad al-Jīd, in the Gezira.⁽¹⁾ His isnād of the Sūfī Path goes back to al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī,⁽²⁾ Ḥabīballāh al-'Ajamī, Tāj al-Dīn al-Bahārī⁽³⁾ and eventually to al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.⁽⁴⁾

In 1254 al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd was said to have performed pilgrimage to Mecca and spent some time at Medina, for further study.⁽⁵⁾

After his return from the Hījāz he was said to have established his first khalwa for the study of the Qur'ān at al-Nukhayra⁽⁶⁾ in 1264, and a village grew around it.⁽⁷⁾

Al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd seems to have been leading a semi-nomadic life, for he used to move with his cattle between al-Nukhayra (where he spent the autumn and winter) and Umm Dawwan Bān (where he spent the summer).⁽⁸⁾

1. Irshād, p.66.

2. Qalā'id, p.34.

3. See above.

4. A Ḥanbalite faqīh and said to have founded the Sūfī Order that bears his name, died in Baghdad in 561 (al-Sha'rānī, II, p.108.)

5. Information Committee, op. cit.

6. Al-Nukhayra lies near Wad Ḥusūna, about fifty km. east of Umm Dawwan Bān (the Information Committee, op. cit.).

7. Qalā'id, p.35.

8. Ibid., p.36.

When at Umm Dawwan Bān, he was said to have opened another khalwa in 1265⁽¹⁾, so as to enable the learners to resume their study during the seasonal migration.

Al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd was said to have been on this seasonal migration for about twenty-one years.⁽²⁾

It seems relevant to mention that during the twenty-one years' period, between A.H.1264 and 1285, when al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd was on the move, the following fugara⁽³⁾ were reported to have alternated over the khalwa - teaching the Qur'ān - at Umm Dawwan Bān:

- A.H.1264 al-fakī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājǰ
- A.H.1265 al-fakī Ballah b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājǰ
- A.H.1266 al-fakī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājǰ
- A.H.1267 the second khalīfa designate: Aḥmad b. al-Shaykh
Muḥammad b. Badr
- A.H.1269 al-fakī Ballah
- A.H.1273 al-Shaykh 'Alī al-Karrār b. al-Shaykh Muḥammad Badr
- A.H.1274 al-fakī 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-fakī Muḥammad al-
Mahlāwī
- A.H.1285 the first khalīfa designate, al-Shaykh al-Ṭayyib (who
died within the life-time of his father)⁽⁴⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.163, n.

2. Qalā'id, p.36.

3. Ibid., pp.35-6.

4. Ibid., p.36.

In 1285, and after these twenty-one years of seasonal migration between al-Nukhayrah and Umm Dawwan Bān al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd was said to have finally settled at the latter as his permanent seat⁽¹⁾. There, he was said to have established himself as the principal Sūfī Shaykh in charge of the khalwa and the initiation and instruction of his followers in the Sūfī Path, while his assistants taught the Qur’ān and ‘ilm.

The Qur’ān - as the basic function of all teaching khalwas - was taught, during this period, by al-Shaykh al-Ṭayyib b. al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd. Sharī‘a subjects (fiqh, tafsīr, tawhīd) were taught by al-Sharīf Abū Bakr al-‘Awad, al-Qādī al-Hājj Hāmid, and al-fakī Muḥammad al-Takūnī; while taṣawwuf was taught by al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd, himself,⁽²⁾ who was said, also, to have initiated twenty five Shaykhs in the Sūfī Path.⁽³⁾

When al-Shaykh al-Ṭayyib died in 1296, he was replaced, as teacher of the Qur’ān, by his brother al-‘Abbās who taught for six years (1296-1302).⁽⁴⁾

Al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd, then, and his khalwa seem to have risen high in status and popularity, for at the breakout of the

1. The Information Committee, op. cit.

2. Irshād, p.65.

3. Among those were Muḥammad al-Muqalī, Muḥammad Abū Ṣāliḥ and ‘Abd al-Qādir Abū Kasāwī (Qalā’id, p.48).

4. Qalā’id, p.36.

The fourth khalifa at the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān was al-Shaykh Ḥasb al-Rasūl b. al-Shaykh Muḥammad Badr, who continued in office between 1331 A.H. and 1349 A.H. Besides the task of the administration and Ṣūfī guidance, al-Shaykh Ḥasb al-Rasūl was said to have continued teaching the Qur'ān. Thus, in effect, he seems to have continued teaching the Qur'ān for thirty eight years (A.H.1311-1349).

It seems relevant to refer to the contribution of al-Shaykh Ḥasb al-Rasūl, in comparison to that of the other teachers of the Qur'ān at the khalwa, from its beginning up to the end of his period in office, in terms of the number of students who were said to have learnt the Qur'ān under these teachers, as has been illustrated below:⁽¹⁾

	Students (<u>ḥāfiz</u>)
<u>al-fakī</u> Ballah b. Moḥammad al-Ḥājj (taught between A.H.1265-1266, 1269-1273)	42
<u>al-fakī</u> 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mahlawi (taught between A.H.1274-1285)	111
al-Shaykh al-Ṭayyib b. al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd (taught between A.H.1285-1296)	201
al-Shaykh al-'Abbās (taught between A.H.1296-1302)	71
al-Shaykh (<u>khalīfa</u>) Ḥasb al-Rasūl (taught between A.H.1311-1349)	<u>575</u>
Total of those who had learnt the Qur'ān	<u>1,000</u>

1. Qalā'id, p.39.

Mahdiyya Revolution, in 1297/1881, being as one of the prominent Sūfī Shaykhs of the Sudan, he was reported to have been instructed by al-Mahdī to mobilize his followers and join the jihād forces against the Turco-Egyptian regime.⁽¹⁾

Al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd, backed by his followers, responded positively and was said to have made successful attacks on the Turco-Egyptian forces and contributed greatly in the capture of Khartoum, the capital.⁽²⁾

However, shortly after the victory of the Mahdiyya forces and the fall of Khartoum and while he was on his way to meet al-Mahdī who was camping at the time at Abū Si‘id, Omdurman, al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd died at al-Jurayf - East in Muharram, 1302⁽³⁾, i.e., at the age of seventy-six.

In line with the practices of traditional khalwas of hereditary succession, al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd was succeeded by his son Ahmad - as the second khalīfa to the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾ Al-khalīfa Ahmad was reported to have occupied this post for about twenty-five years - between A.H.1302 and A.H.1327.⁽⁵⁾ During this period, while al-khalīfa Ahmad was instructing his followers on

1. Shuqayr, vol.II, pp.251, 254 and 255.

2. Ibid.

3. Qalā'id, p.33.

4. Ibid., p.40.

5. Ibid.

tasawwūf, the teaching of the Qur'ān and related subjects were conducted by others, such as al-fakī 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-fakī Ḥandul who was reported to have taught the Qur'ān for four years - between A.H.1302 and 1306.⁽¹⁾

Between A.H.1306 and 1307, however, the study at the khalwa was said to have been suspended because of the famous famine of A.H.1306.⁽²⁾

Al-fakī Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Nūr was reported to have taught the Qur'ān for four years - between A.H.1308 and A.H.1311.⁽³⁾

Then from A.H.1311 till the death of al-khalīfa Ahmad in A.H.1327, the teaching of the Qur'ān and 'ilm at the khalwa was said to have been conducted by al-Shaykh Ḥasb al-Rasūl⁽⁴⁾ and his assistants.

The third khalīfa at the khalwa was al-Shaykh 'Alī al-Karrār b. al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd (A.H.1327-1331)⁽⁵⁾ who, like his predecessors, was teaching tasawwūf, while al-Shaykh Ḥasb al-Rasūl continued teaching the Qur'ān.

1. Qalā'id, p.40.

2. Ibid., p.36.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p.42.

Since then it is believed that thousands of students have learnt the Qur'ān at this khalwa.

It was during the khilāfa of al-Shaykh Ḥasb al-Rasūl that the Condominium administration attempted to convert the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān into a khalwa nizāmiyya - in line with the Government's policy to control the traditional khalwas.⁽¹⁾

In 1338/1921, and apparently in response to a demand for a modern elementary school to be established at Umm Dawwan Bān, al-Shaykh Bābikir Badrī, as inspector of elementary education, then, was sent to the khalīfa of the khalwa to inform him about the Government's decision.⁽²⁾

The khalīfa and his followers were greatly alarmed by that order. However, after an overnight's deliberations, they decided to reject the Government's decision and to persist in defending their heritage.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, in order to avert an open clash with the Government they were persuaded by al-Shaykh Bābikir Badrī to pretend that they had accepted the order, by agreeing to send one of their sons for the two-months teachers training course. When

1. See Period of the Condominium, above.

2. Badrī, Bābikir, Tarīkh Hayātī, vol.II, p.167.

3. Ibid., pp.167-8.

that happened he promised them to cancel the order within a period of two years.⁽¹⁾

Consequently, the decision to convert the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān (like many traditional khalwas of the time) into a khalwa nizāmiyya was frustrated.⁽²⁾

Thus, a serious crisis seems to have been averted and the khalwa continued as before, performing its traditional functions. As far as its educational role was concerned it seems to have been maintaining almost the same academic standard it had enjoyed during the lifetime of its founder, al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd.

In 1339/1922, for example, the khalwa was reported to have been teaching, besides the Qur'ān and the ability to read and write, the same subjects it had taught under al-Shaykh al-'Ubayd (d.A.H.1302) - fiqh, tafsīr and tasawwuf.⁽³⁾ The books studied were almost the same: al-'Ashmāwī, al-Risāla and Mukhtasar Khalīl, for fiqh; Tafsīr al-Jalālayn for tafsīr and al-Ghazālī's Ihyā 'Ulūm al-Dīn for tasawwuf.⁽⁴⁾

Similarly, under the fifth khalīfa of the khalwa - al-Shaykh Muṣṭafa b. Badr - who succeeded al-khalīfa Ḥasb al-Rasūl, the

1. Badrī, op. cit., p.168.

2. Ibid.

3. Irshād, p. 65.

4. Ibid.

khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān seems to have been carrying on its traditional functions.

Unlike his predecessor, however, al-khalīfa Muṣṭafa did not teach, but was in charge of the khalwa and its administration.⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless, the traditional subjects were taught. In addition to the Qur'ān (reading and writing) which was taught by al-fakī Hārūn⁽²⁾, 'ilm subjects such as fiqh, tafsīr and tawḥīd were reported to have been taught (in 1359/1942) by the imām of the mosque who was a graduate of al-Azhar.⁽³⁾

However, since that time the khalwa's academic status seems to have gradually been eroded - thus reflecting the pressure on the khalwas, already referred to.⁽⁴⁾

Under national rule, and greatly encouraged by the favourable Government attitude and policies towards khalwas and in line with the general trend of revival of these institutions, the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān seems to have been steadily flourishing. Extensive renovations have taken place.

The masīd or the khalwa complex of Umm Dawwan Bān was (in 1981) in the form of a huge elaborate complex of white-washed

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.35.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.37.

4. See "Conditions of khalwas under the Condominium Rule" above.

buildings surrounded by red brick-built walls.⁽¹⁾

At the entrance of the masīd was the khalīfa's khalwa of reception - a neat and a well-carpeted room.⁽²⁾

Then immediately inside the masīd stands a high white-washed qubba of the founder of the khalwa - the Sūfī Shaykh, al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd. The qubba has been beautifully decorated with rows of electric bulbs and neon bars which, by night, make the shrine visible from distant places.⁽³⁾

Opposite to the qubba, on the same eastern side, was the newly built mosque with its high minaret - also decorated with electric neon bars.⁽⁴⁾

Beyond these was a spacious courtyard covered with clean soft sand, surrounding and mainly lying in front of the khalwa of study.⁽⁵⁾

The khalwa was a sort of elaborate hall - supported by concrete columns - and a spacious veranda. The floor of the

1. Observations of the writer on his visit to the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, in November, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

khalwa was covered with soft sand and had no furniture except the fakī's prayer mat. The learners usually sat in circles on the floor with wooden slates in their hands, and reed pens and self prepared ink-pots beside them. At the corner of the khalwa hall was a raised platform for the lawhs to be put on.⁽¹⁾

Within the same masīd is the qubba of al-khalīfa Ḥasb al-Rasūl,⁽²⁾ also white-washed and decorated with lamps.

Beyond these were the students' khalwas of accommodation. These khalwas have been built of mud - like most of the village buildings.⁽³⁾ because of the large number of ḥayrān, which was estimated at about five hundred and fifty in 1981, the rooms seem to have been overcrowded.⁽⁴⁾ Each group of between five and ten junior learners, usually those coming from the same tribe or locality, lived together, all at the expense of the khalīfa.⁽⁵⁾

As alluded to above, the khalwa witnessed impressive material progress. It has been supplied with tap water instead of drawing water from the well, and electric light has replaced

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1. The writer's visit to the khalwa, November, 1981.
 2. The fourth khalīfa to the khalwa, see above.
 3. The writers visit to the khalwa, November 1981.
 4. The khalwa had, in 1981, fifty-three rooms or khalwas of accommodation of varying sizes. (The writer's visit).
 5. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, Qur'ān teacher at the khalwa, November, 1981.

the traditional tuqqāba (wood fire).⁽¹⁾ Ceiling fans, water coolers and refrigerators have been introduced, too.⁽²⁾

In addition to accommodation the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān was (in 1981) supplying its 550 students with ready-made meals and clothes for the needy, also.⁽³⁾

It is interesting to note that in this respect, the teachers, too, have been provided with such privileges, in addition to their salaries.⁽⁴⁾

It was said to have been the practice at the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān to provide all the deputies of the khalīfa⁽⁵⁾ with needs for living - each with daily rations and seasonal clothes for himself and family, according to a detailed arrangement as follows:⁽⁶⁾ flour; half a kilogram of meat; vegetables and salad; half a pound of cooking oil; one and a half lbs of sugar (10 lbs. per week) and tea; perfumes (weekly) and soap; clothes for the fakī and members of his family twice a year.

1. Cf. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, pp.35-

2. The writer's visit to the khalwa, November 1981.

3. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

4. Ibid.

5. See the khalīfa's deputies, below.

6. See also "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

In all this, the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān was said to have depended almost entirely on financial and material support of the followers of the Shaykh - on their zakāt, and generous donations. The khalwa has refrained from Government aid.⁽¹⁾

Today the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān, like almost all of the main khalwa centres of Northern and Central Sudan, has developed an efficient, though traditional, administrative machinery.

At the top of the administrative hierarchy was the khalīfa of the khalwa - al-Shaykh Yūsuf (grandson of al-Shaykh al-‘Ubayd), who was said to have had his post by descent.⁽²⁾ Al-khalīfa Yūsuf was in charge of all the khalwa affairs - educational, Ṣūrī activities and maintenance of all those under his guardianship.⁽³⁾

In order to carry out his duties effectively, he had been assisted by a number of wukalā’, (sing. wakīl) deputies. It should be noted that the khalīfa himself did not take part in teaching.

The khalīfa's deputies in 1981 were the following: the deputy for teaching was al-fakī ‘Alī b. Ṣāliḥ, an old experienced teacher who was assisted by two able younger teachers:

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1. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, Umm Ḍawwan Bān, November, 1981; see "Financial aspect", below.
 2. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, op. cit.
 3. Ibid.

al-fakī 'Uthmān al-Rayyāh b. al-Hudūr, and al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl b. 'Abbās.⁽¹⁾ Under these were usually the advanced students or junior halqa teachers.⁽²⁾

Other deputies who assisted the khalīfa on administrative matters and services were:

- The khalīfa's personal secretary, who would attend to the khalīfa's personal services; he was also called al-maqqadam.⁽³⁾
- The khalīfa's deputy for financial affairs, revenues and expenditure. In 1981, this post was held by Khālīd al-Takūnī.⁽⁴⁾
- The deputy (wakīl or muqqadam) for Ṣūfī rituals, especially nawba, dhikr.
- The deputy for guests' affairs - the man in charge in 1981 was 'Alī Mūsā b. al-khalīfa Karrār. His function was to receive the khalwa guests and to arrange their accommodation and hospitality in accordance with their social status.⁽⁵⁾
He was usually assisted by a number of old students.

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1. Interview at the khalwa with these three teachers.
 2. See "Methods of teaching and learning", below.
 3. The writer's visit to the khalwa, November 1981.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Interview at the khalwa with the deputies, November 1981.

- The deputy for grain and flour. This post was said to have been held by descent by al-Zayn Bābikir al-Zayn, whose duty was the storage and supply of grain and flour to the families of all people living on the khalwa - the khalifa, his deputies, the guests and for the preparation of the students' meals, 'asida.⁽¹⁾
- The deputy for meat, vegetables and cooked mulāh (to be distributed to the students). The person in charge in 1981 was Ḥasb al-Rasūl Wad al-Tuwaym.⁽²⁾
- The deputy for spices, sugar and tea, cooking oil, etc. The man in charge was al-'Awad al-Ṭāhir.⁽³⁾

Besides these deputies was the imām of the mosque - for Friday prayer - al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Alī al-Mahdī.⁽⁴⁾

However, despite the impressive material changes and reforms the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān, like most khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan, does not seem to have introduced any significant reform on the educational aspect. Not only that but the traditional relatively high academic standard and broad programmes of study have been seriously eroded.

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1. Interview at the khalwa with the deputies, November 1981.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

Although, as a Qur'ānic teaching centre the khalwa seems to rank amongst the top khalwas of the country, its general educational role does not seem to have responded to the changing needs of the age and the environment. It is largely for this reason, it seems, that its traditional clients - the people of the locality - have by-passed it to the modern school. To illustrate this, no learner from the populace village around it was studying at the khalwa - even the khalifa's son has joined the primary (complementary) school.⁽¹⁾ Hence, all the khalwa students were said to have come from outside the region - mainly from Western Sudan.⁽²⁾ Learners from outside the country have also been attracted to this khalwa. In 1981, there were about 70 foreign students at the khalwa of Um^h Dawwan Bān - from such countries as Eritrea, Chad, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and Zaire.⁽³⁾

However, as a famous traditional Ṣūfī centre, the khalwa's popularity and social status does not seem to have declined. It has been actively engaged in its mass Ṣūfī rituals. Its nearness from the capital, Khartoum, seems to have encouraged the President and notables to frequently visit it.

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1. The writer's visit to the Complementary School of Umm Dawwan Bān, November, 1981.
 2. Interview with al-fakī 'Uthmān b. al-Hudūr, November, 1981.
The writer's own observations at the khalwa.
 3. The writer's observations and meeting with these students.

E. The Khalwa of al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī at Kadabās

This is another example of the traditional Sūfī khalwa that survived the Condominium period and which under the national rule was renovated, and today is considered as one of the most flourishing khalwas in the Sudan.

The site of the khalwa has been at the village of Kadabās which lies on the western bank of the Nile just north of al-Ghubush and about twenty kilometres from Atbara.⁽¹⁾

The region is inhabited mainly by the tribes of the Ja'aliyyīn, the Shayqiyya, the Rubātāb and al-Manṣīr - who all depend, to a great extent, on the river irrigated cultivation for their living.⁽²⁾

The origin of the khalwa goes back to about 150 years, when it was first founded by al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ja'alī.⁽³⁾

As a young boy Aḥmad al-Ja'alī was said to have migrated to the khalwa of al-faqīh Aḥmad al-Ṣādiq al-Karūrī, at Nūrī, where he learnt the Qur'ān and studied fiqh (khalīl) under him.⁽⁴⁾

1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, brother of the khalīfa, Kadabās.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, brother of the khalwa khalīfa (al-Ḥājj Ḥamad) at the khalwa of Kadabās, November 1981.

4. Ibid.

On completion of his khalwa studies Ahmad al-Ja'alī was reported to have engaged himself in china pottery trade between his district Berber, al-Obeid in Kordufan, and al-Hijāz.⁽¹⁾ Then all of a sudden he is said to have abandoned his trade and embarked on meditation and prayer - secluding himself at a khalwa which he established for the purpose.⁽²⁾

When he was asked by his relatives about the motives behind his change of behaviour he was said to have told them that he had been instructed by the Prophet al-Khidr to do so.⁽³⁾

Ahmad al-Ja'alī was reported to have secluded himself, then, at his khalwa for about seven years, during which time he corresponded with a number of the famous Sūfī Shaykhs of the day - such as al-Sayyid al-Ḥasan al-Mirghani⁽⁴⁾, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-'Ubayd b. Badr of Umm Dawwan Bān⁽⁵⁾, and al-Shaykh

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1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, brother of the khalwa khalīfa (al Ḥajj Ḥamad) at the khalwa of Kadabās, November 1981.
 2. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Ja'alī (about eighty years old), the uncle of the khalifa, Kadabās, November 1981.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Head of the Mirghaniyya Khatmiyya tarīqa in the Sudan, founded by al-Sayyid Muḥammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghani (d.1268/1853 see al-Tawā'if, p.8.)
 5. See the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, above.

Ismā'īl al-Walī of Kordufan⁽¹⁾ - requesting each of them to initiate him as a Shaykh in the Sūfī Path but no-one seems to have responded to his request.

However, while he was undergoing this state of frustration he was reported to have claimed that he had been visited by a Sūfī Shaykh called 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Khurasānī, whom, he claimed, had come from Baghdad via Hījāz, with the sole purpose of delivering the "trust" - the Qādirīyya tarīqa - to him (i.e. to Ahmad al-Ja'alī).⁽²⁾ Accordingly, al-Shaykh al-Khurasānī was said to have initiated Ahmad al-Ja'alī as a Sūfī Shaykh in the Qādirīyya tarīqa and returned to Baghdad.⁽³⁾

The region at the time was said to have been dominated by two rival tarīqas: al-Khatmiyya - under al Sayyid al-Ḥasan al-Mirghani - and al-Shādhiliyya of al-Majādhīb⁽⁴⁾, but when al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī spread his tarīqa it eclipsed both of them.⁽⁵⁾

Besides his khalwa of initiation, al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī was said to have established another khalwa for teaching the Qur'ān.⁽⁶⁾

1. Head of the Ismā'īliyya. Tā'ifa, a branch of the Khatmiyya
(al-Tawā'if, p.8.)

2. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al Ghaffār, al-Ja'alī,
Kadabās, November, 1981.

3. Ibid.

4. See the khalwa centre of al-Majādhīb, above.

5. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Ja'alī.

6. Ibid.

Muhammad Ahmad (al-Mahdī) who was then studying under al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Khayr at the nearby khalwa of al-Ghubush was said to have been a regular visitor to the khalwa of al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī at Kadabās.⁽¹⁾

At the break-out of the Mahdiyya revolution and at the time when al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Khayr (in his capacity as the Amīr appointed by al-Mahdī) took control of all Berber region, al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī, accompanied by his son Hamad, migrated to al-Mahdī at al-Rahad (in Kordufan) to swear allegiance to him.⁽²⁾

Al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī and his son Hamad were said to have accompanied al-Mahdī then in all his jihād campaigns and to have joined the Mahdiyya forces that captured Khartoum, the capital, in 1885.⁽³⁾

It should be noted here that during the years of the Mahdiyya revolution the khalwa education was suspended for the sake of jihād.

After the death of al-Mahdī, al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī returned to his village, leaving behind his son Hamad to continue his (father's) support for the Mahdiyya cause, under the leadership

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1. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Ja'alī.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

of al-Khalīfa 'Abdullāhī.⁽¹⁾

Meanwhile at Kadabās al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'alī resumed teaching the Qur'ān at his khalwa, and continued to be in charge of his khalwa till his death in 1899.⁽²⁾

Under the Condominium rule, and when conditions permitted, the khalwa continued its traditional role of teaching the Qur'ān.⁽³⁾

Al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī was succeeded, as khalīfa in charge of the khalwa and its teaching function, by his son al-Shaykh al-Hajj Hamad, who continued as Shaykh of the tariqa and the khalwa till his death (in 1912).⁽⁴⁾

The third khalīfa over the khalwa, according to the traditional hereditary system, was the late khalīfa's son, al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Hajj Hamad, who continued in charge of the khalwa, including its Sūfī rituals of the Qādirīyya tariqa till he died in 1927.⁽⁵⁾

Al-Shaykh Muḥammad was then succeeded by his brother, al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'alī b. al-Hajj Hamad, as the fourth khalīfa

1. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Ja'alī.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

over the khalwa, founded by his grandfather al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'ali I.⁽¹⁾

It was under al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'ali II, whose khilāfa lasted for fifty years (1927-1978)⁽²⁾, that the khalwa was said to have steadily flourished and risen in fame and status.⁽³⁾

During this period, which extended over the latter part of the Condominium rule (1898-1955) and the period of national rule (1956 -) and since then, the khalwa of Kadabās seems to have become the most important one in the region, north of Khartoum. It has become well established, influential and active in playing its educational, spiritual and social roles.

Al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'ali II seems to have restricted his activities to the overall administration of the khalwa - assisted by a number of deputies - while the teaching function was taken by a hired fakī for the Qur'ān; and since 1970, by a wā'iz from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, for the teaching of 'ilm.⁽⁴⁾

Since 1978 the khilāfa of the khalwa has been taken over by the late khalīfa's nephew - al-Shaykh Ḥājj Ḥamad b. Muḥammad.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī al-Ja'ali, brother of the khalīfa.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

The present khalīfa was reported to have been a graduate of al-Ma'had al-'ilmī of Omdurman.⁽¹⁾

Like his predecessors, he was in charge of the overall khalwa administration, the Ṣūfī affairs and the spiritual leadership over his numerous followers across the region, assisted by his brothers.⁽²⁾

The teaching of the Qur'ān - which was the main function of the khalwa - was assigned to, and successfully shouldered by, a hired deputy to the khalīfa - al-fakī 'Alī Dūdū, who was said to have been carrying this job for more than forty years.⁽³⁾

The teaching of 'ilm which was introduced relatively recently (since 1970) which consisted of afternoon lessons of fiqh, tajwīd, sīra, tawhīd and hadīth, was the responsibility of a wā'iz or a murshid (a preacher) from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.⁽⁴⁾

Both teachers received salaries from the Government and additional financial aid from the khalīfa, and seem to have been enjoying a comfortable life at Kadabās.

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1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās; al-Ma'had al 'ilmī of Omdurman, has been transformed into the Islamic University of Omdurman.
 2. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.
 3. Interview with al-fakī 'Alī Dūdū, Kadabās, November, 1981.
 4. Interview with ustādh 'Alī.

Aside from its educational role, the other main function of the khalwa - or perhaps its more important role in the region - seems to have been its active engagement in the Qādirīyya Sūfī tariqa.⁽¹⁾

Since the introduction of the tariqa, for the first time, by al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'alī, the founder of the khalwa, his successors were said to have inherited his titles, posts, responsibilities and privileges.⁽²⁾ Hence, each of the successive khalīfas was in charge of the overall administration and upkeep of the khalwa and was responsible for the perpetuation and the spread of the Qadirīyya tariqa and the guardianship of his Sūfī followers, who were said to have remained loyal to the khalīfa in charge, rendering to him their moral and financial support.⁽³⁾

The manifestation of this phenomenon at Kadabās today - as at other active Sūfī khalwas - has been exemplified in the erection of the qubbas over the tombs of the founder, al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'alī and his successive khalīfas, the visitations by followers who frequently flocked to the qubbas and, also, to the khalīfa of the day seeking the baraka of their spiritual Shaykhs and in the performance of such Sūfī rituals . as the

1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

popular mass "nawba dhikr".⁽¹⁾

In addition to the above, the khalwa of Kadabās has been famous for the treatment of mentally sick individuals - al-Majānīn.⁽²⁾ It seems interesting to note that once these insane persons were seen by the khalīfa of the khalwa, he would read 'azīma for them and then they would be allowed to move about freely around al-masīd, though chained by the feet, without harming anybody.⁽³⁾

It is the perpetuation of the popular activities of the Sūfī Path which seems to have welded the Sūfī followers together in a brotherhood that has always provided the khalwa khalīfa with the moral and financial support he needed.⁽⁴⁾ As a result of this, the whole of the khalwa cultural heritage, its pattern and practices, seem to have been successfully preserved and perpetuated - including the educational. Not only that but the khalwa has witnessed great material progress.

Under the period of national rule (since 1956) and as a

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1. Such activities are exercised at almost all of the active Sūfī khalwas such as Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba Qurashī, etc.
 2. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.
 3. The writer, on his visit to the khalwa of Kadabās (November, 1981) saw a number of these majānīn moving about freely with their chains.
 4. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.

result of the Government's supportive attitude and policies towards the khalwas and in line with the general trend of khalwa revival, the premises of the khalwa of Kadabās were said to have undergone substantial material renovation and improvement.⁽¹⁾

Starting as a humble khalwa for meditation - a mud room (jālūs) and another larger khalwa for study, also made of jālūs⁽²⁾, the khalwa complex or al-masīd of Kadabās, today, comprises the following: the modern built khalwa or reception hall of the khalīfa; the qubba of al-Shaykh al-Ja'ālī the great and his successors; the spacious red-brick built khalwa of study - in the form of a large rectangular hall supported by columns of concrete, with paved sand floor (with no furniture), the strange sight of a blackboard;⁽³⁾ and the prayer mosque with its high minaret.⁽⁴⁾ All these have been white-washed and the spacious courtyard of the complex surrounded by a wall.⁽⁵⁾ The masīd has been provided with water taps and an electric generator for light.⁽⁶⁾ All the study and Sūfī activities were performed within these premises, which occupy the centre of the village.⁽⁷⁾

1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī.

2. Personal observations of the writer, on his visit to the khalwa centre of Kadabās, November 15th, 1981.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

The students' khalwas of accommodation, however, lie on the outskirts of the village. What seems to be interesting about these hostels was that they were originally established as blocks of jālūs-built houses, with the approval of the khalīfa, by groups of his Ṣūfī followers (each group from a certain tribe or village) to use . . . for their own accommodation, when they came for visitations or attended the seasonal Ṣūfī ṭarīqa celebrations at Kadabās.⁽¹⁾ However, since for most of the year these houses would be vacant, they have been used for the accommodation of the khalwa's large student population of about 350, who all came from outside the village.⁽²⁾ All these houses were furnished, equipped with cooking utensils and tap-water.⁽³⁾

In addition to the comfortable accommodation the students were provided with food raw materials - flour, meat, cooking oil, spices, sugar, tea, etc.⁽⁴⁾

Not only that but they were said to have been provided with clothes and pocket money, too.⁽⁵⁾

In all its expenditure the khalwa was said to have been dependent , mainly, on the financial support of its Ṣūfī

1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.

2. Ibid.

3. Personal observations of the writer, Kadabās.

4. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās, 15 November 1981.

5. Ibid., see financing below.

followers - in the form of zakāt, nudhūr and sadaqāt.⁽¹⁾

What seems unique about the khalwa of Kadabās, in this respect, is that it owns rich endowments, in the form of shops in the main cities and towns of Khartoum, Omdurman, Berber and Atbara, and houses for rent, at the industrial town of Atbara, and in addition to all these, it has agricultural schemes.⁽²⁾

Hence, the khalwa of al-Shaykh al-Ja'ālī at Kadabās seems to have been one of the most prosperous khalwas in the Sudan today - providing comfortable life for the khalīfa, his assistants and the students, too.

Moreover, the khalīfa, as a spiritual leader and a social reformer seems to have been very influential - not only at Kadabās but across the region of Berber.⁽³⁾

Because of his high position, the village of Kadabās has been provided with all the necessary social services - water, medical care and modern schools for both boys and girls.⁽⁴⁾

In addition, the khalīfa of the khalwa was said to have

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1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.
 2. Ibid.
 3. All those who believe in the Sūfī ṭarīqas in the region paid tribute to the khalīfa (information from ustādh 'Alī).
 4. Information from ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās.

introduced many social reforms such as encouraging simple marriage festivals at minimum costs, simple funerals and minimum expenditure on the occasion of death; and the promotion of brotherhood and cooperation amongst his followers and the people of Kadabās.⁽¹⁾

On the educational aspect - our main concern - and in comparison with most of the other traditional khalwas, the khalwa of Kadabās seems to have had a superior academic standard - especially after the introduction of 'ilm lessons. In this respect, it was, in effect, providing a multi-course religious education, comprising of the teaching of the alphabet and the ability to read and write, the memorization of the Qur'ān, fiqh tawhīd, hadīth and sīra.⁽²⁾

Despite all this the khalwa of Kadabās has not been able to compete with the modern primary school to attract even the children of the numerous Sūfī followers of the khalwa Shaykh. There was not even a single child enrolled at the khalwa of al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī from the large village of Kadabās, in which it has been functioning.⁽³⁾ Children of the village and the region have - for long - been sent to the modern school where through its superior educational facilities they could be better prepared for practical life, for higher education and for employment in the modern sector.

1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī.

2. Interview with al-fakī 'Alī Dūdū.

3. Interview with ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās, 15th November, 1981.

F(a) The Village Khalwas in Darfur Province

The present day concentration of khalwas in Eastern and Western Sudan, as indicated by the table above, seems to have been building up, in each of these two regions, over two different periods of time - greatly varying in length, and as a result of different factors.⁽¹⁾

In Western Sudan - and especially in Darfur region - as indicated earlier,⁽²⁾ the build up of khalwas has been a long process that could be traceable to the reign of Sulayman Solong.⁽³⁾ Throughout the ages it was encouraged by the Sultans and the public.⁽⁴⁾

Under the Condominium rule, paradoxically, while the khalwa expansion and role were actively opposed in northern and central Sudan⁽⁵⁾, it seems to have been left to expand in Darfur region.⁽⁶⁾ The khalwa's position seems to have been consolidated by the fact that modern sector jobs were rare, school education very scarce and the region, generally, was and still is dominated by

1. See the table no.III above.

2. See the Turco-Egyptian Period, above.

3. Shuqayr,, vol.II, pp.112-3. Further every village had a masjid (khalwa) for teaching the Qur'ān and writing; each 'alim had a masjid for prayer and khalwas for teaching shar'ia sciences to al-mujawirīn (Shuqayr, vol.II, p.146).

4. See "Financial Aspects of khalwa Education", below.

5. See the Period of the Condominium, above.

6. See Table No. J, above.

subsistence level economy.⁽¹⁾

Under national rule, too, the majority of the population of the region are engaged in pastoral and traditional agricultural activities. Hence, modern employment opportunities and modern educational services are still meagre and the traditional popularity of the khalwa has continued.⁽²⁾

Today, encouraged by the general trend of khalwa revival, which has been consolidated by the government's moral and financial support, and backed by the positive public response, in this region, hundreds of khalwas seem to have emerged to the extent that each village - even the small ones - has its own khalwa. Hence, the fact that 65% of the total number of the country's khalwas are located in Western Sudan.⁽³⁾

As examples of the hundreds of small day khalwas that spread all over the region of Western Sudan - especially in Darfur - reference could be made to two khalwas:

- A) the khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā at al-Fashir, the provincial capital of Darfur; and
- B) the khalwa of al-fakī Yahyā at the village of al-Ni'ma, Tawīla Rural District.

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1. Dar^{fur} Province is one of the least developed regions in the Sudan - especially in modern education.
 2. See Table No. III above.
 3. Nūr, p. 4.

The first khalwa was established by al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā (now 61 years old), in 1953.⁽¹⁾ It should be noted that al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr had studied the Qur'ān and 'ilm, as a child in neighbouring Chad and according to him the khalwa practices here (Darfur) and there seem to have been very similar.⁽²⁾

His khalwa at al-Fāshir has been established adjacent to the tomb (qubba) and the mosque of Sultan 'Alī Dīnār.⁽³⁾ It was held around a large and shady 'hijlīj' tree surrounded by an enclosure of straw.⁽⁴⁾ Today the teaching of children continues to be conducted under the same tree, in the courtyard of the mosque, but surrounded by a brick-built wall.⁽⁵⁾

When asked why the children couldn't be taught inside the mosque the reason given was to keep the mosque clean and tāhir and free from the children's noise, lest it distracted and disturbed the worshippers.⁽⁶⁾

1-2. Interview with al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā at his khalwa in al-Fāshir, December 6th, 1981.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. The writer's own observations.

6. Interview with al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā, op. cit.
See p.8 above.

The khalwa has been a non-boarding day khalwa. It is interesting to note that, like most of the village or neighbourhood khalwas, it has been conducting a sort of co-education. Young children of both sexes study at the khalwa, but each group has its own circle.⁽¹⁾ The maximum number of boys studying at the khalwa was 88 whereas that of the girls was 53⁽²⁾ in the 1950s. Today the khalwa holds 27 boys and one girl in the mornings, and 40 boys and 10 girls in the afternoons.⁽³⁾

The main function of the khalwa has been the teaching of the Qur'ān, reading and writing and elementary fiqh.⁽⁴⁾

However, the khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr has been playing three roles:

- (a) As a preparatory stage to the khalwa for those who have travelled especially to study (muhājirīn khalwa) and to the primary school.

Children join this khalwa at the age of 4-5 years, learn the alphabet, reading and writing and the short sūras of the Qur'ān.⁽⁵⁾ By the time they learnt the Surat al-Bayyina

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1. The writer's observations; information from the fakī.
 2. Information from al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsa.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

(sūra:98) and managed to have its sharāfa on their lawhs⁽¹⁾, they would move to the advanced distant khalwa of the muhājirīn.⁽²⁾ Sometimes, in order to retain these children for a longer time al-fakī Muhammad Nūr 'Īsa would not allow the decoration of their lawhs (sharāfa) or would defer it till a relatively advanced stage of learning of the Qur'ān - till they had learnt juz 'amma⁽³⁾, or even tabāarak⁽⁴⁾

However, by the age of 7-8 they usually leave this khalwa and move away to join a distant muhājirīn khalwa.⁽⁵⁾

On the other hand, more and more children who have had this preparatory stage, as described above, leave the khalwa but are sent by their parents to a primary school in the town instead of allowing them to go to a muhājirīn khalwa.⁽⁶⁾

(b) The khalwa as complementary to the school.

In the afternoon many schoolchildren were said to come to this khalwa to study the Qur'ān under this fakī. Here they would usually learn more of the Qur'ān than was covered by the school

1. For sharāfa and lawh see "Methods of teaching and learning" below.

2. See "The khalwa of al-muhājirīn at Nāmī", below.

3. Qur'ān, Part 30.

4. Qur'ān, Part 29.

5. Interview with al-fakī Muhammad Nūr.

6. Information from al-fakī Muhammad Nūr.

programme and at the same time consolidate what was given there.⁽¹⁾

For the same purpose many schoolchildren were said to have been sent by their parents to study the Qur'ān at this khalwa during the school summer vacation (April - July) of every year.⁽²⁾

(c) The khalwa as an adults' teaching centre:

In addition to the above, the khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā conducts a weekly long study session for adults.⁽³⁾ Every Friday, after the Jum'a Prayer, al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr usually gave instruction in the Qur'ān, teaching those interested how to read the Qur'ān correctly.⁽⁴⁾ He would also give instruction on elements of fiqh, especially on 'ibādāt.⁽⁵⁾ The lesson would usually take place inside the mosque instead of under the tree.⁽⁶⁾

Al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā is in charge of his khalwa and the discipline of his students. He seems to believe in, and practice, severe corporal punishment as an aid for effective teaching - a

1. Information from al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

practice which he seems to have transferred from his experience in Chad.⁽¹⁾

Al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr seems to have been uneasy of the diminishing high social and financial status of the khalwa as a result of the spread of the schools.

His main financial income seems to come from the salary which he obtains from the Department of Religious Affairs (now, 1981, raised to LS 28 per month), from the PT 50 which he charged each learner reaching the stage of sharāfa and about to join a muhājirīn khalwa, and the writing of amulets.⁽²⁾

The second example of the small khalwas of Western Sudan was that of al-fakī Yahyā Fadl at the village of al-Ni'ma, Tawila Rural Council.⁽³⁾

The khalwa was established about 1965. The khalwa was a sort of large flat-roofed Ḳākūba built of local material, like the rest of the village buildings, of wood and straw. It was surrounded by a zarība (thorn enclosure) and lies in the centre of the village.

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1. Interview with al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr at his khalwa, al-Fāshir.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

The buildings of the village itself are low huts (qutṭīyyas), every two or three of them were bound by enclosures of straw (sarīf) and thorny branches of trees. Around the village were the tobacco plantation fields of the villagers.

The main function of the khalwa - like all other khalwas today - was the teaching of the Qur'ān in addition to reading and writing.⁽¹⁾

As alluded to above, the khalwa was a non-boarding institution. Like a great number of similar khalwas it was attended by both boys and girls.

In 1981 it had two halqas: one for boys comprising thirty children and another for girls consisting of twenty.⁽²⁾

Like almost all of the small countryside khalwas of Darfur, this khalwa had three roles:

a) Preparatory stage to the muhājirīn khalwas and the school: As explained above,⁽³⁾ children join this khalwa also at the age of about five years to learn the short sūras of the Qur'ān and reading and writing. They would study for a short

1. Interview with al-fakī Yahya.

2. Ibid.

3. See khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr, above.

session in the morning and in the evenings. Then they would either join the village school or a distant muhājirīn's khalwa.⁽¹⁾

b) Complementary and consolidating centre to the school:

Like the khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Isā, at al-Fāshir,⁽²⁾ schoolchildren used to come to this khalwa in the late afternoon to study the Qur'ān. They study throughout the early evening. During the day, however, the children went to school or assisted their parents in their fields.

Al-fakī Yahyā, the khalwa teacher, seems to be reasonably contented with his social and financial status. He receives a salary from the Government and at the same time he owns a tobacco field and some livestock to live on.⁽³⁾

Most of the khalwa children aspire to join the school - the khalwa fakī's own son, Muḥammad, was studying at the secondary school at the time; yet he and four of his fellow students regularly attended the evening session for the study of the Qur'ān.⁽⁴⁾

From the above, it could be seen that almost all of the small village khalwas conduct part-time teaching, early morning

1. Interview with al-fakī Yahyā.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

and late afternoon or early evening. In comparison with the khalwas in other parts of the country - especially in Northern and Central Sudan - they are by far lagging behind in this respect.

Further, these village khalwas in Western Sudan do not seem to be concerned with teaching the whole of the Qur'ān, as do the khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan, but rather a very small portion of it, one to three "juz'", it seems. Their role has, in fact, been a preparatory one only - for the ineffective muhājirīn khalwa or the school which is less concerned with the teaching of the Qur'ān.

From a survey of lists of hundreds of khalwas that are spread all over the region of Darfur, the writer has realized that as regards their student population these khalwas are extremely small.

For example, of the 128 khalwas of the Western region of Darfur, 80 khalwas held under 20 children each, 36 had between 20-30 learners and only 12 of them seem to have had more than 30 children each.⁽¹⁾

Viewed from another angle, the small size of the student population of each khalwa seems to reflect the size of each

1. Records with the writer.

village in which the khalwa operates, while the great number of these khalwas seems to reflect the popularity of the khalwa institutions.

As an indication of the increasing popularity of these khalwas the writer has found out that the 105 khalwas of South Western Darfur have been established in the period between 1930-1980.⁽¹⁾

To confirm such a trend the 54 khalwas of Kutum Rural Council were recorded to have been established between 1935-1979.⁽²⁾ In other words, these khalwas in comparison with the khalwas of Northern Sudan, for example, appear to be very young.

1. Records with the writer.

2. Ibid.

F(b) The muhājirīn khalwa camp of Nāmī

The muhājirīn's camp of Nāmī was said to have been founded by al-fakī Idrīs Abū 'Ushar - father of the present khalwa Shaykh, al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā - in 1943.⁽¹⁾

It seems relevant to state that al-fakī 'Abd Mūlā, himself, had experienced study and living at a muhājirīn's khalwa.⁽²⁾ He started learning the Qur'ān at the same muhājirīn's khalwa camp of Nāmī, Tawīla district, under his father, al-fakī Idrīs Abū 'Ushar.⁽³⁾ Then, like almost all of the youth of the region, he set out at an early age to study at a distant muhājirīn khalwa in Zalingi region.⁽⁴⁾ There he seems to have had a long experience with the practices of this type of khalwa life, for he had to spend about fifteen years just to study the Qur'ān and its tajwīd.⁽⁵⁾

On completion of his study he returned to his home district where he embarked on his father's muhājirīn's khalwa, at Nāmī, and established himself as the khalīfa, in charge.⁽⁶⁾

1. Information obtained by the writer from al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā, at the muhājirīn khalwa camp of Nāmī, December 9th, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

His muhājirīn's khalwa at Nāmī, as was seen by the writer,⁽¹⁾ was a sort of separate khalwa students' village or camp, situated near the village of Nāmī, composed of about forty khalwas for students' accommodation - in the form of low quttiyyas or huts. They were built by the muhājirīn themselves, around the fakī's khalwa of study and residence. Each khalwa (quttiyya) could accommodate up to ten children. However, each of the old and advanced muhājirīn would have his own independent quttiyya or khalwa of accommodation.

It seems interesting to note that at this camp and in line with the general practice each group of students coming from the same locality, or related together by way of kinship, would usually live together under the same roof or in adjacent quttiyyas that are bound together by a thorny enclosure.⁽²⁾ To consolidate this sense of relationship, or of being distinct from the others, each such group would have its own tuqqāba (wood fire)⁽³⁾ around which these students sat to read the Qur'ān. About a hundred and twenty muhājirīn were living and studying at this khalwa in 1981.⁽⁴⁾

The khalwa chief administrator and principal teacher was

1. The writer's visit to the muhājirīn khalwa of Nāmī, 9th December, 1981.
2. Interview with al-fakī 'Abd al-Mulā, 9th December, 1981.
3. The writer's observations.
4. Ibid.

al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā. He was in charge of the general supervision of khalwa affairs, in addition to teaching the Qur'ān - almost the only subject taught at this khalwa.

Like almost all the traditional khalwas that exist all over the country, the main function of the muhājirīn's khalwa is to teach the Qur'ān together with practical elementary fiqh, especially 'ibādāt.⁽¹⁾

However, unlike most of the boarding khalwas, the Shaykhs of muhājirīns khalwas - as that of Nāmī - are not responsible⁽²⁾ for the upkeep of their large students' population. Hence, the whole burden of living - accommodation and upkeep - has been shouldered by the muhājirīn themselves.⁽³⁾

Faced with this serious problem, being away from their distant homes, and finding no other reliable source of securing food, it seems the muhājirīn have been forced to go round the villages asking for food.⁽⁴⁾ This action has developed throughout

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1. See "khalwa curricula", below.
 2. Interview with al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar at his muhājirīn camp at Nāmī, December, 1981; Interview with the muhājirīn (students) of the camp.
 3. Ibid; this has been an established practice in Dār-ḥūr and was confirmed by all the fakīs I met in the region and by the officials of the Department of Religious Affairs al-Fāshir.
 4. Interview with al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā and the muhājirīn at Nāmī, and confirmed by other fakīs.

the years into an established tradition that seems to have been socially acceptable to both the muhājirīn and the local communities in Dār-Fūr.⁽¹⁾

To the muhājirīn, it seems to have been an easy way of securing food and often the only possible way; to the rural society it seems to have been regarded as a charitable act to the ones most entitled, and that God would reward them for it.⁽²⁾

In line with such a traditional practice, every morning and early evening the young boys of al-muhājirīn's khalwa at Nāmī were sent out by their group leaders to go around the houses of the village and ask for food.⁽³⁾ The children would usually chant prayers to the housewives so that their hearts might soften and and that they would give more generously.⁽⁴⁾

1. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.118; BSS, pp.136-137.

2. Interview with al-muhājirīn at Nāmī, and their teachers.

3. Information from the muhājirīn of Nāmī and confirmed by their fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā. The old muhājirīn do not go round the village asking for food because they would have done so when they were young, and they would have a feeling of embarrassment if they did when they were adults.

4. Information from the muhājirīn at Nāmī. The same practice was confirmed by many ex-muhājirīn such as al-Shaykh Abū Bakr Najm al-Dīn of al-Fāshir and al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā.

On their return, the young boys would prepare the food and distribute it amongst all the members of the group.

On Tuesdays of every week the young muhājirīn were sent out on their weekly four day tour round the neighbouring villages, carrying their lawhs - decorated with the sharāfa - and chanting prayers in a chorus asking for grain at the door of every house of the villages.⁽¹⁾ They usually returned on Fridays loaded with what mixture of grain and raw food material they would be fortunate enough to secure.⁽²⁾ Al-fakī usually would have his share from the grain collected.⁽³⁾

At the camp these groups of children would be engaged in collecting firewood, fetching water from the well, grinding the grain into flour and cooking the food. It should be added here that the work would be divided amongst the groups of children by their group leader.⁽⁴⁾

During the rainy season study at the khalwa was usually suspended. All the muhājirīn would go out to the land where they would help al-fakī 'Abd al-Mulā to cultivate his land and also sell their labour to other village cultivators.⁽⁵⁾

1. Information from the muhājirīn of Nāmī.

2. Ibid; see also Trimingham, op. cit., p.118.

3. BSS, p.142.

4. Information from al-muhājirīn at Nāmī.

5. Ibid., see also Trimingham, op. cit., p.118.

Because of their preoccupation with the problem of securing food for their existence and because of their engagement in working for the fakī, the muhājirīn at the khalwa of Nāmī would usually need between ten and fifteen years just to learn the Qur'ān; and to study 'ilm - fiqh, tafsīr and ḥadīth they would need another ten years.⁽¹⁾

However, even when the advanced muhājir student was about to finish his studies, his graduation was often delayed by the fakī for up to another four years so as to assist the latter in carrying out his functions.⁽²⁾

When the muhājir finally finished his study he would be provided with about four or five learners by the fakī to take with him to his home district so as to serve as a nucleus for the new khalwa the graduate would open at his home, if there had been none before.⁽³⁾

From the brief foregoing survey of the muhājirīn's movement in general and the living example of this institution as seems to have been represented by the muhājirīn's khalwa of Nāmī, it seems clear that the movement has been deeply rooted amongst the people of Dār-ḥūr. The parents, as alluded to above, seem

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1. Information from the muhājirīn at Nāmī.
 2. Ibid., confirmed by al-fakī 'Abd al-Mulā, and al-fakī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥarūn of Ṭawīla.
 3. Information from al-muhājirīn and confirmed by their fakī, see "Methods of teaching and learning" below.

to have been motivated by their deep conviction of the necessity of learning the Qur'ān, to allow their children to set out on hijra (migration) they would devote all their time and effort to enable them study at the hands of highly regarded religious khalwa Shaykhs, and at an ideal spiritual environment.⁽¹⁾ In addition, they seem to have hoped that their sons- the muhājirīn - would return to their home district as highly qualified fakīs who would open khalwas at their villages or at least come out as respectable religious men.⁽²⁾

This attitude towards the hijra seems to have been backed by the relatively high social and financial status the khalwa fakī still enjoys in the countryside.⁽³⁾ As an indication of this, a khalwa fakī in the countryside in Dār-Fūr province is often offered two wives in marriage on the same day.⁽⁴⁾ In addition, the villagers (and the learners) usually help him cultivate his land.

The natives of the locality where the muhājirīn's khalwa is situated, on the other hand, have continued for ages to extend a charitable hand to the needy learners of the Qur'ān as

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1. Interviews with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl, al-Shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn Ibrāhīm and al-Shaykh Abū Bakr Najm al-Dīn, al-Fāshir, 7th December, 1981.
 2. Ibid.
 3. See "Teachers' Status", below.
 4. Information from al-Shaykh Ḥasabū, Department of Religious Affairs, al-Fāshir; confirmed by al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Hārūn, Tawīla.

a religious duty.

Another factor which seems to have encouraged the perpetuation of the muhājirīn khalwa, in addition to factors already mentioned, is the fact that the khalwa in Dār-Fūr had been, till the mid-1930s the only educational institution in the region,⁽¹⁾ and since then has remained the main one.

However, under national rule, traditional muhājirīn khalwa practices seem to have been subjected to increasing investigations by both Government bodies and/or by interested individuals.⁽²⁾

As a result many serious shortcomings in addition to some of the positive contributions of the muhājirīn khalwa, for example, have been brought to the surface.⁽³⁾

1. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl, op. cit.

2. The present writer; and see below.

3. See below.

G. The Khalwas of Al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāi at Hamishkorayb

Since the dawn of Independence, in the early 1950s, the mountainous border Beja region of Eastern Sudan - now known as the Borders Rural Council⁽¹⁾ - seems to have been witnessing an unprecedented outburst of khalwa revival, centred on Hamishkorayb, which seems to have resulted in an overall social change.

However, before elaborating on the development of these khalwas and their wide social impact, it seems relevant to shed light on the social aspect of life in the region before the recent emergence of these institutions, and the forces behind it.

Nomadic life had been for centuries the striking feature of almost all the region of Eastern Sudan. The different Beja tribes were said to have been always on the move in quest of water and suitable grazing areas for their animals. The region, on the whole, was reported to have been stricken by poverty, ignorance and inter-tribal conflicts and mistrust; and the masses

1. The region lies in the northern part of Kasala Province on the eastern borders of the Sudan with Eritrea, Ethiopia, between latitudes 15.5° and 18.5°N, and longitudes 36°E and 38.5°E. The area covered is about 34,660 sq.kms., holding a population of about 60,000 inhabitants. The region is mainly populated with the Beja tribes - such as the Benī 'Āmir, al-Bishariyyīn, al-Amar ār, Ertayga, Khāsā and al-Kamīlāb (Office of Assistant Governor for Education, Kasala, December, 1981).

were said to have been living in darkness for lack of religious knowledge and practices.⁽¹⁾

Although there had existed a handful of traditional khalwas in the region that were said to date back to the Turco-Egyptian period in the Sudan (1256/1821-1302/1885) such as those of Awdī, Arīdī, Arfīn, Salom, Wagig and Takalanayb, which were established by the Samarandawāb tribe,⁽²⁾ yet they do not seem to have had any significant impact on the people there.⁽³⁾

Hence, ignorance, irreligiousness, murder, armed raids, banditry and taking pride in evil-doing and criminal practices were said to have been the common features of social life.⁽⁴⁾

Today, however, the situation has changed completely. Huge and populace khalwas for the teaching and learning of the Qur'ān and 'ilm, for both men and women, young and old, have spread all over the region. As a result, it is generally held that social life has been dramatically transformed; peace, stability and a spirit of brotherhood has reigned, and overall social and economic development has been taking place.⁽⁵⁾

1. Information obtained from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, a companion of the founder of the khalwas, al-Shaykh Alī Bitāī, Hamishkorayb, December, 1981.

2. The fakī of the khalwa of Awdī.

3. Interview with al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, Hamishkorayb, December, 1981.

4. Al-Hidāyah, pp.32, 57.

5. Ibid., p.21; see below the achievements of the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāī.

Such a miraculous change seems to have been generally attributed to the initiative and efforts of a "God-sent saviour" to his lost people - al-Shaykh 'Alī Maḥmūd Bitāī.⁽¹⁾ The man was said to have been inspired to call upon his people to return to God by erecting khalwas and embarking on learning and reading the Qur'ān and complying with the teachings of Sharī'a.⁽²⁾ His call seems to have met with/enthusiastic positive response from the repenting masses, and social change followed.⁽³⁾

But who was 'Alī Bitāī and what helped him succeed in causing a very great revival in a relatively short period, i.e., since the start of his khalwas in 1951?

'Alī Maḥmūd Bitāī was reported to have been born, to a nomadic family, in 1930 in the region of Hamishkorayb.⁽⁵⁾ But his ancestry is said to be traced back to al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh Jammā', leader of the Arab tribes and first viceroy to the Funj King of Sennar (913/1504) and hence, ultimately to Mūsā al-Kāẓim

1. See below, for further information.

2. Al-Hidāya, pp.21-24, 29-36, 40-45, 58.

3. See below for social changes.

4. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭahir Abū Bakr, Hamishkorayb, December, 1981.

5. Al-Hidāya, p.14; Hamishkorayb has developed into the largest village in the region and has become the khalwa centre of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī and successors.

and Caliph 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet.⁽¹⁾
Accordingly he claims to have been of a sharīfī descent.

At the age of four his father died and he was left in the custody of his mother and elder brother - Muḥammad Aḥmad - who was said to have been a man of piety and insight. He took care of him and supported him, especially through the years of ghaybūba or a state of near unconsciousness,⁽²⁾ and backed the call afterwards [to return to the Qur'ān].⁽³⁾

The origin of his call:

By the age of six, according to al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, he started seeing the Prophet in a vision - a thing which became so frequent that he used to experience it day and night.⁽⁴⁾

Nevertheless, he seems to have continued, up to the age of

1. Al-Hidāya , pp.17-18.

2. Ibid. , p.14; al-ghaybūba or near unconsciousness was said to have been a state of jadhḥ or a state of stupor believed to have been caused by being engulfed in a state of spiritual intoxication. (Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, companion of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, now (1981) in charge of the women's khalwa at Hamishkorayb, December, 1981.

3. See below.

4. Al-Hidāya , p.14.

seventeen, leading a normal nomadic life like his fellow youths, taking part in all their activities - their games, ceremonies, music and smoking the local tobacco, gāmsha.⁽¹⁾

At the age of seventeen, however,^{as} he reports, he seems to have been engulfed in a state of ghaybūba which he attributed to the constant vision of the Prophet.⁽²⁾ That state [of ghaybūba] was said to have lasted for three years.⁽³⁾

It was during this state of ghaybūba that he was reported to have emerged as a man endowed with baraka and karāmāt (blessings and miracles making)⁽⁴⁾. Numerous stories were reported about his karāmāt. The following could be mentioned as examples:

(a) One day, seeing a nomad riding on his camel back, he stopped him and bluntly told him that he would die after three months, and asked him to repent to God. The man, called Ahmad ‘Isā Bāmkār, was reported to have died on the very date foretold by ‘Alī Bitāī.⁽⁵⁾

1. Al-Hidāya , p.14.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Information from al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, Hamishkorayb.

5. Al-Hidāya , p.47.

(b) While still in his state of ghaybūba, he was reported to have been visited by a delegation from the village of Tahadāī. The people brought with them a man who was a hāfiz of the Qur'ān, whom they had nominated to be an imām of their mosque, and hoped that 'Alī Bitāī would bless his appointment.⁽¹⁾ Instead, 'Alī Bitāī was reported to have opposed such an action. Not only that, but he was said to have warned the delegation that their nominee would commit major crimes and indulge in evil-doings - such as drinking alcohol and committing murder.⁽²⁾ Hence, they immediately rejected their nominee and appointed instead another one of their lads called Ṭāhir Aḥmad Adam whom 'Alī Bitāī had chosen.⁽³⁾

As for the original nominee, he was reported to have committed, afterwards, all the crimes foretold by 'Alī Bitāī.⁽⁴⁾ Consequently that man - his name was Muḥammadayn Adarawb - was reported to have been jailed for life.⁽⁵⁾

Many similar karāmāt were said to have been attributed to 'Alī Bitāī the emerging young Shaykh of baraka, and have been circulating all over the region.

1. Al-Hidāya , p.47.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.48.

4. Ibid., p.47.

5. Ibid.

As a result many of the people became apprehensive that 'Alī Bitāī might reveal their crimes - and consequently a considerable deal of the lost or stolen property was said to have been returned to its original owners, including camels and cattle.⁽¹⁾ Not only that but the people became so conscious of the karamāt of 'Alī Bitāī to the extent that even if they found gold lying on the ground nobody would dare to pick it up.⁽²⁾

Following the successful manifestation of such karamāt, the stories of which seem to have been spread all over that closed region, people - especially those around him, gradually came to believe in him as a walī.⁽³⁾ This stage seems to have served as a preparatory for the next major, and more important one.

By the end of his three-year state of ghaybūba 'Alī Bitāī was reported to have again seen the Prophet, in a vision, in the direction of Mecca.⁽⁴⁾ According to him, on that occasion the Prophet Muḥammad instructed him to call upon the people to return to God and repent to Him - warning that: "Ummatī (my community)", repeating the word seven times, "had relied on its

1. Al-Hidāya , p.48.

2. Ibid.

3. Interview with al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr, Hamishkorayb, 2nd December, 1981.

4. Al-Hidāya ., p.15.

present and neglected its future [the Hereafter]. Tell them to repent to Allāh, to read the Qur'ān and adhere to the tahlīl".⁽¹⁾

Then, according to 'Alī Bitāī, the Prophet indicated a spot where a mosque should be erected for prayer and teaching of the Qur'ān, and he ('Alī Bitāī) was chosen by the Prophet for the guidance of his people.⁽²⁾

It was immediately after this vision that 'Alī Bitāī was said to have awakened from his three-year's state of ghaybūba ⁽³⁾ He became fully conscious of himself but greatly preoccupied with the huge responsibility put upon his shoulders. However, he determined to carry out the mission he was entrusted with.

The message of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī - which he was to call upon all his people to follow - was exemplified in the following main principles:⁽⁴⁾

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1. Al-Hidāya. , p.15; al-tahlīl refers to "lā ilāh illa Allāh, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh" (there is no god but God and Muḥammad is His Messenger). The writer has heard this tahlīl chanted frequently after prayer at the mosque-khalwa of Hamishkorayb.
 2. Al-Hidāya , p.15.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., p.58.

- (a) All people must pledge their sincere and ultimate repentance to God.
- (b) They must perform their five daily prayers in a group - (jama'at prayer).
- (c) All people, men as well as women, must embark on learning and reading the Qur'ān.
- (d) They must forgive and tolerate each other - and live in brotherhood.
- (e) They must abandon and refrain from discrimination, whether ethnic, economic or social - amongst groups or individuals.
- (f) All nomads must settle down - in order to carry out these religious duties, especially learning the Qur'ān.
- (g) All people must earn their living by lawful means, and must rely on themselves.

When he conveyed this message to those around him he was said to have found an immediate response from his elder brother, Muḥammad Aḥmad, who supported him and accompanied him, on camel back, to spread his call to his extended family and to the people of the region generally.⁽¹⁾

1. Al-Hidāya , p.20.

The first people to respond to his call were the clan of his father at Baglid, then, the tribe of his mother Rīdī, then the tribe of Qur'ayb and the tribe of Shar'āb.⁽¹⁾ Other groups and individuals - even from across the borders of Eritrea, such as al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Uthmān, leader of the tribe of Banī 'Āmir - were said to have responded positively to his call.

While the message continued to spread fast across the region, many started to speculate about who al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was. To one group he was the expected Mahdī, to another he was a renovator of Islam, while to many of the masses, he was believed to have been the Prophet 'Īsā sent by God to salvage the people and to fill the earth with justice and equity through the teachings of Islam.⁽²⁾

However, there seems to have been a general belief that the message conveyed to al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī by the Prophet, in a vision, was an authentic one.⁽³⁾

Consequently, a wave of religiousness seems to have swept

1. Al-Hidāya , p.20.

2. Ibid., p.15; confirmed by al-fakī al-Tahīr Abū Bakr.

3. A ḥadīth reported by Abū Hurayrah and narrated by al-Shaykhan and al-Tirmidhī according to which the Prophet said: "Whoever saw me in a vision [while asleep] must have seen me, for the devil cannot impersonate me".
(al-Hidāya , p.13).

all of the region; and people of all walks of life were said to have been dominated by a spirit of self-awareness of their own past wrongdoings. In response to the call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, and motivated by both fear of God and desire to please Him, the masses, all over the region, were said to have declared their utter repentance to God and pledged their loyalty and submission to the guidance of their spiritual leader. They embarked on erecting khalwas for the Qur'ān and prayer and began to comply with the different aspects of the call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, not only at Hamishkorayb, where the mother khalwa-mosque was established, but also in their own localities.⁽¹⁾

As a result of all this a drastic and overall positive change was said to have taken place.⁽²⁾

It was not only amongst the people of his own region that his call seems to have met popular response, but even across the borders in Eritrea his message was being welcomed.⁽³⁾

The region of Eritrea seems to have been suffering from almost the same miserable conditions of life.⁽⁴⁾ The people

1. Interview with al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr at Hamishkorayb, 2nd December, 1981.

2. See below, for the social change brought about by the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

4. Al-Hidāya , p.25.

there, following the news of the positive changes that were taking place across their borders in neighbouring Sudan as a result of the religious call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī desired to have the same introduced in their region.⁽¹⁾ Hence, their delegations were said to have invited al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī to visit their region.⁽²⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, for his part, did not only welcome the invitation, but further enlisted their support for his call through a well-proven and most effective spiritual appeal, for it seems he told the Eritrean delegations that he had already seen, in a vision, their most reverend pious Eritrean saint - al-Shaykh Muṣṭafā b. al-Shaykh Ṣawlīb who had entrusted him with a special message to the masses of his people in Eritrea.⁽³⁾

Hence, on his arrival in Eritrea and throughout his tour across the countryside, he was said to have been warmly received by the masses who were eager to see him and to hear his call and to receive the message of their dead saint.⁽⁴⁾

The masses were reported to have readily responded to

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Al-Hidāya , p.25.
 4. Information from al-Shaykh al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī's call to return to God, revive the Qur'ān and its institutions and to live in brotherhood in accordance with the teachings of Islam.⁽¹⁾

The message of the Eritrea that was said to have been entrusted to Shaykh Bitāī seems to have been a confirmation of the religious call of the latter - it was a warning to the people of Eritrea against conflicts and bloodshed and a call to return to God and join hands in brotherhood.⁽²⁾

Consequently, the masses in the region of Eritrea like those of Hamishkorayb region in the Sudan, were said to have declared their absolute repentance to God and pledged their submission and loyalty to the guidance of al-Shaykh Bitāī.⁽³⁾

At this stage, the Government circles in both the Sudan and Eritrea were reported to have become greatly worried and concerned about the emergence of such a spontaneous and popular religious movement that could undermine their authority if left unchecked.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, they were said to have acted swiftly and al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was reported to have been discreetly deported, escorted,

1. Al-Hidāya , p.25.

2. Ibid.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr.

4. Ibid.

to the Sudan.⁽¹⁾

On his return home, al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was summoned by the Hadendawa tribal leader who, on the instructions of the Government, interrogated him on his unwarranted visit to Eritrea.⁽²⁾ Then he was confronted with the following serious Government charges:⁽³⁾ a) that he was claiming prophethood; b) that he was inciting the tribes against the Government; and c) that he was trying to exploit the masses.

On the other hand, the tribal leader was reported to have promised al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī that all those could be dropped on condition that he carried out the following:

- (a) To dismantle all khalwas of the Qur'ān which he and his followers had established, together with the settlements which the nomads built around those khalwas.⁽⁴⁾
- (b) Further, he was to order his settled followers to return to their nomadic mode of life, and to warn them that failure to comply with these orders would result in six months' imprisonment or LE 18 pounds fine against each adult male.⁽⁵⁾

1. Al-Hidāya , p.25.

2. Ibid.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

4. Al-Hidāya ,

(c) He should stop advising people on religious matters.

(d) He must not mention anything about his vision of the Prophet.⁽¹⁾

(e) Further, if 'Alī Bitāī would positively respond to such conditions, the tribal leader offered/^{him}the opportunity of living with him, and at his expense, and would offer him a teaching and learning post, at his mosque-khalwa.⁽²⁾

The response of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, however, seems to have been very disappointing to the Government. He strongly rejected the allegation that he had been a man of violence and reaffirmed that his call was a peaceful one, and in support of this he referred to his instructions to his followers to abandon carrying their customary tribal weapons and to carry instead their lawhs, ablution jugs, prayer skin mats, their rosaries and to seek refuge in reading the Qur'ān at their khalwa-mosques.⁽³⁾

As regards his vision of the Prophet, al-Shaykh 'Alī declared that it was a fact that could in no way be denied.⁽⁴⁾ And, in reference to the order to pull down the established khalwas and settlements, he confirmed to the tribal leader that it had been his dream to multiply their number and he would not

1. Al-Hidāya , p.26.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

destroy any.⁽¹⁾ Not only that, but he declared his readiness to bear all the consequences.⁽²⁾

Hence, in an attempt to stamp out the movement, al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was detained and further interrogated at Aroma then Kassalā's provincial prison and eventually sent into internal exile to Wādī Halfa,⁽³⁾ with the result that he remained in prison from 1954-1960.⁽⁴⁾

Paradoxically, the news of his imprisonment seems to have given to al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī more publicity, and to have aroused the interest and support of the masses to his call, not only in his own region but in the different parts of the country. Delegation after delegation of religious oriented people were said to have flocked to visit him at his prison to receive the Prophet's message from his lips, and returned to their own regions, intent more than ever, to establish khalwas for learning the Qur'ān and mosques for prayer.⁽⁵⁾

Then, as a result of public pressure, and in attempt to enlist the support of al-Shaykh Bitāī's followers, sympathisers and many others interested in the cause of religion, General 'Abbūd's Government, urged by the religious leaders, it seems,

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1. Al-Hidāya , p.26; confirmation by al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Al-Hidāya , p.49.
 4. Ibid., p.16.
 5. Ibid., pp.16, 50-51.

not only decided to release al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī but took positive steps to back his call for the revival of the khalwas of the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾

As alluded to above, the basis of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī's inspired religious and social movement was mass religious education disseminated through the network of khalwas he and his followers established all over the region, for both men and women.

The first effective and main mosque-khalwa has been the one established at Hamishkorayb at the site said to have been indicated to him by the Prophet, in a vision.⁽²⁾ It lies at the foot of Mount Hamishkorayb, on flat, open land.⁽³⁾ It started as a humble, relatively small khalwa built out of perishable local building material - dawm tree stems, branches and leaves in the shape of a flat-roofed hut.⁽⁴⁾

Today, despite the building of an elaborate brick-built mosque, the original khalwa structure seems to have been retained

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, a companion of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī and in 1981 in charge of the khalwas of women at Hamishkorayb.
 2. Al-Hidāya , p.15; information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, Hamishkorayb, 2nd December, 1981.
 3. The writer's visit to the khalwa and the region 1-4 December, 1981.
 4. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, Hamishkorayb.

but of course enormously expanded and renewed to cope with the huge student population it accommodates.⁽¹⁾ The khalwa was still, in 1981, a sort of huge flat-roofed mosque-like, building made of the same local material - dawm tree stems, branches and leaves. It was in the form of a spacious mosque of about 60 x 40 metres in dimension, with a high thatched roof supported by pillars of dawm tree stems.⁽²⁾ Hence, in view of the fact that it has been a huge hut-like building with its walls of thatch and with numerous entrances, it seems to have been more convenient to its eight thousand learners, who assembled for study and prayer under its roof during the day, and outside in its spacious courtyard during the cool nights.⁽³⁾

Like almost all khalwas, it had barely any furniture. The learners group themselves in halqas (circles) on the sand-covered floor or on the burūsh (prayer mats made of date-palm leaves). When they were not using their lawhs they used to stand them against the walls or pierce them through the thatched walls.⁽⁴⁾

The spacious khalwa courtyard was surrounded by a wooden fence. The learners usually would keep it clean. As the courtyard around the khalwa was generally considered as part of the

1. See the students' population of the khalwa, below.

2. The writer's visit to the khalwa.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

khalwa, the students were in the custom of taking off their shoes outside its entrance and walking about it bare-footed, as was the practice at almost all of the Sūfī khalwas elsewhere.⁽¹⁾

On the sides of the courtyard there were about twenty mound-like heaps of raised earth, each about twenty metres from the other, which were said to have been the sites of the huge tuqqābas (wood flames) around which the learners used to sit for study during the night.⁽²⁾ Since 1978, however, the khalwa has been using electric light produced from an electric generator - donated to it - which seems to have been of great help for learners during their evening session.⁽³⁾

About five hundred metres away from the khalwa lies the qubba (shrine) that has been erected on the tomb of the founder al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī⁽⁴⁾ who died in 1978.⁽⁵⁾ That was a clear

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1. Out of reverence to sacred places like the mosques and the khalwas of the Qur'ān, Muslims take off their shoes before entering these places, lest they pollute them with an unclean substance they might have trodden on.
 2. For further information on tuqqāba see "Methods of Teaching and Learning", below.
 3. The writer's observations and interviews with the learners at the khalwa, Hamishkorayb.
 4. This was an evidence that he was almost regarded as a Sūfī Shaykh with a qubba on his grave (the writer's visit to the khalwa).
 5. Al-Hidāya , p.63.

indication that he has been regarded as a saint, although during his lifetime/^{he} was said to have been against such an attitude.⁽¹⁾

The khalwa has been surrounded by the students' or muhājirīn's khalwas of accommodation which were said to have been built by the muhājirīn themselves, but assisted by the residents who provided them with the local building materials.⁽²⁾ The students' khalwas of residence were huts built in the form of qutātī (sing. quttīyya)⁽³⁾ each accommodating about five learners.

As a result there developed a huge students' village, with the residential village of the natives and their families lying nearby.⁽⁴⁾

Within the residential village, on the other hand, there has emerged the largest women's khalwa in the country.⁽⁵⁾

As a result, the population of Hamishkorayb (which was non-existent before the call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, and which was

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

2. Ibid.

3. A quttīyya is a hut with a cylindrical base and a conical top, usually all made of wood and thatch, but sometimes the base wall is made of mud or unbaked brick.

4. The khalwa was the nucleus for the village, see above.

5. The writer's observations and visit to the khalwa.

said to have emerged as a result of, and developed with, the khalwa) was estimated in 1981 at twenty-five thousand inhabitants.⁽¹⁾ Except for those who were too old or too young or the sick, almost all the residents of Hamishkorayb - men, women and children - were said to have been regular attendants of the khalwas, full-time or part-time.⁽²⁾

It seems relevant to refer briefly at this stage to the main features of the development of both khalwas.

The khalwa for men at Hamishkorayb, as indicated above, was said to have come into being in compliance with the instruction of the Prophet - in a vision - to al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī⁽³⁾. The latter, in turn, was reported to have directed his people to embark on learning the Qur'ān and to establish its institutions, as he was often reported to have preached:

"Kindle the flame of the Qur'ān and erect khalwas for the Qur'ān and places for prayer at your settlements. Erect a khalwa for men and another for women - even amongst five abodes, or tents."⁽⁴⁾

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 2. Ibid.
 3. See above.
 4. Al-Hidāya , p.29.

In response, a humble khalwa for learning the Qur'ān and for prayer was established, in 1951, for men only.⁽¹⁾

The learners, old and young, earnestly and enthusiastically embarked on learning the Qur'ān, the rudiments of Islamic teachings together with reading and writing.

However, since the Beja tribes are non-Arabic speaking people, the tremendous difficulties in learning the language and the Qur'ān could not be over-emphasized. As an indication of such difficulties, it was said to have taken the first generation of old learners about four years just to learn reading and writing in Arabic, and memorize only three juz' (parts of the Qur'ān).⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, as a result of their persistence, and the encouragement and perseverance of their able teachers,⁽³⁾ they were gradually and steadily said to have been transformed

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 2. For convenience, for learning purposes, the Qur'ān has been divided, in terms of volume, into thirty almost equal juz' or parts. The last juz' embraces the shortest sūras (chapters) of the Qur'ān. Beginners usually learn the Qur'ān in a reversed order - starting with the shorter sūras (see "Methods of Teaching and Learning," below).
 3. These were, at the time, the following: al-fakī Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, al-fakī Ḥāmid Adarawb, and his assistants al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, al-fakī 'Umar Bashīr Aḥmad, al-fakī Ḥāmid Ushān, al-fakī 'Alī Najm al-Dīn and al-fakī Ḥusayn Muḥammad Aḥmad (information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr).

into a religiously oriented and educated people.⁽¹⁾ Hundreds of Qur'ān learners graduated from this khalwa and the best amongst them usually volunteered to teach at the khalwa, too.⁽²⁾

The khalwa for men at Hamishkorayb was reported to have steadily expanded. By 1970 its student population rose to 1,200 learners, by 1974 it rose to 5,000 learners and by 1981 it exceeded 8,000 learners.⁽³⁾ It is worth noting that about half of the student population was said to have come from outside the region, not only from the other parts of the country but from other countries as well - such as Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, Eritrea and Yemen.⁽⁴⁾ To illustrate this phenomenon it has been said that the khalwa attracted learners of such different ethnic origins that thirty dialects were spoken by the student population in 1981⁽⁵⁾ - all were united in brotherhood.

In addition to the mother khalwa of Hamishkorayb, other khalwas have been established all over the region, with villages developing around them, and by teachers graduating from the central khalwa - Hamishkorayb.⁽⁶⁾

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

2. Ibid.

3. Information from al-Sayyid Ṭāha, Deputy for the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, Hamishkorayb, 3rd December, 1981.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

Similarly, and in response to the call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, women khalwas have emerged on an unprecedented scale, thus representing the most striking feature of the region.

The first women's khalwa in the region was said to have been established in 1954 under the sister of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī - Nafīsa. After her premature death she was succeeded by her sister Rih Bitāī.

Before 1954, it should be noted, the womenfolk in each family were said to have been taught the Qur'ān and elementary Islamic teachings at home by their guardians or immediate relatives who had acquired such knowledge at the men's khalwas.⁽²⁾

After 1954, however, small and humble women's khalwas were said to have gradually emerged at Hamishkorayb and other settlements.⁽³⁾ By 1970 the number of women's khalwas reached 12, comprising a total of about 500 women;⁽⁴⁾ by 1974 the number of women's khalwas at Hamishkorayb alone rose to thirty khalwas, embracing about three thousand women.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr; al-Hidāya , p. 47.
 2. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.

At that time there seems to have risen a need to give women further systematic instruction on the recitation of the Qur'ān (tajwīd), fiqh (law), tafsīr (exegesis), sīra (biography of the Prophet) and Ḥadīth.⁽¹⁾ Hence, at the instructions of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, it was found necessary to gather together all the women learners of Hamishkorayb at one large khalwa at the centre of the village.⁽²⁾

By 1981 the student population of the women's khalwa was said to have risen to about 5,000 learners.⁽³⁾ It seems worth noting, in this respect, that a large proportion of the women learners, like the men learners, came from outside the region. While the majority of these accompanied their husbands, about five hundred unmarried girls were said to have been brought by their parents and left in the custody of some of the families of Hamishkorayb.⁽⁴⁾

The teaching staff of the women's khalwa was composed of about sixty shaykhāt, who had learnt the whole of the Qur'ān by heart, in addition to a larger number of women assistants - all were accountable in 1981 to al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, the chief supervisor of women's khalwa education at Hamishkorayb.⁽⁵⁾

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

It should be added, also, that there were fifteen other khalwas for women in the villages of the region.⁽¹⁾

Hence, at almost every one of the main villages of the region there was a khalwa for men and another for women. Reference could be made here, in addition to Hamishkorayb, to the following places:⁽²⁾ Tuqān, Mamān, Tawayalt, Tamakriz, Darastah, Tahadāi and Talkūk.

It is worth mentioning that since the emergence of his khalwas in 1951 and throughout his lifetime⁽³⁾ al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was reported to have been spending on the upkeep of these khalwas (students and teachers) mainly from his own purse.⁽⁴⁾ However, he seems to have been receiving assistance, in this respect, from his dedicated followers in terms of cash or kind. Al-Shaykh 'Alī used to depend on extensive rain cultivation to secure grain for his large and expanding/^{number of} dependents and learners.

After his death in 1978, his successors continued cultivating the rainy lands to maintain the khalwas. However, they were also reported to have been receiving increasing aid from the Government and especially from President Numayri and the regional

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 2. The writer's visit to these villages.
 3. Al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī died on 18th September, 1978, (al-Hidāya , p.63).
 4. He was said to have had a number of commercial lorries whose revenue was exclusively spent on the khalwas.

governor, in the form of grain and cash, to help them meet their obligations.⁽¹⁾ As an example of this aid, President Numayri was reported on two occasions to have provided the khalwa at Hamishkorayb with 5,000 and 3,000 large sacks of dura (grain) from the Government.⁽²⁾ Grants in cash to the khalwas and salaries to the teachers have been, of late, of great help to these khalwas.⁽³⁾

It should be noted that the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, all over the region, have been serving as full-time institutions of study to their full-time devoted learners, whether they were local or muhājirīn.⁽⁴⁾ The best example, in this respect, was the mother khalwa at Hamishkorayb. This seems to have been a clear indication that the main role of these khalwas has been teaching and learning.

Further, it should be emphasized that the main function of the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāī was the teaching of the Qur'ān, with reading and writing as a means to that objective; and the teaching of fiqh, tafsīr, Hadīth and Arabic grammar, as auxiliary subjects.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Information from the Deputy for khalwas, Hamishkorayb, 3rd December, 1981.
 2. Ibid.
 3. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.
 4. Information from the Deputy for khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī.
 5. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr; see also "Curricula and Books", below.

In addition to the above, the learners usually attended to the 'after prayer lesson'. In accordance with the guidance of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, immediately after each of the five daily prayers, the imām, or anyone of the people authorized, would deliver a maw'iza (sermon) - comprising mainly/a Hadīth, verses of the Qur'ān or a fiqh problem.⁽¹⁾ The maw'iza would usually address itself to the treatment of a current social and religious problem.⁽²⁾

As well as its educational role, as has been alluded to above, the khalwa has also been used as a mosque for the five daily prayers and for the Friday prayer.⁽³⁾

It seems obvious that the khalwa has been used also, in effect, by almost all the male residents of Hamishkorayb - barring those who were too young or too old - as their main meeting place. In this capacity the khalwa seems to have served as a socio-religious club, where all the problems of concern could be treated.⁽⁴⁾

The khalwa for women, likewise, was said to have been conducting the same functions.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr; the writer has witnessed such a maw'iza.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

During the lifetime of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, as the initiator and spiritual leader of the movement, he was said to have been the sole person in charge of all his khalwas.⁽¹⁾

However, since al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was almost an illiterate person - having studied the Qur'ān only up to the sūra of al-zalzala (chapter of the earthquake)⁽²⁾, he could not be expected to have been engaged in the actual instruction of the learners. Hence, since the emergence of the khalwa, in 1951, al-fakī Ḥamid Muḥammad Ḥamid Adarawb has been the one in charge of the teaching functions at Hamishkorayb, assisted by very able fuqarā.⁽³⁾

Al-fakī Adarawb, as had been alluded to before, was assisted in this role by a number of able and dedicated teachers.⁽⁴⁾

In 1981 under the principal teachers there were more than fifty assistant fakīs or fuqarā who usually chaired the halqas for learners.⁽⁵⁾

The first khalwa for women, on the other hand, was run by

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

2. Qur'ān, sūra 99.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

4. See above, p.

5. The writer's visit to the khalwa of Hamishkorayb, 3rd December 1981.

the sisters of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī - Nafīsa, who was then succeeded by her sister Rīh.⁽¹⁾ A number of assistant women teachers helped in the instructional activity.⁽²⁾ After 1970, however, when the thirty women's khalwas at Hamishkorayb were amalgamated into one huge central khalwa, al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr was transferred from the men's khalwa and put in charge of the women's education at the women's khalwa.⁽³⁾

Al-fakī al-Tāhir was assisted in his role by about sixty women teachers (shaykhāt) who had learnt the whole of the Qur'ān by heart, and studied 'ilm at the hands of the khalwa teachers.⁽⁴⁾ Under these, were a larger number of assistants.

Generally speaking, there seems to have been a great similarity between the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī and the old revived khalwas of the riverain region⁽⁵⁾ in such matters as the focus of khalwa education - the Qur'ān - the methods of teachings,⁽⁶⁾ the preparation of teachers and their functions,⁽⁷⁾

1. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.; observations of the writer.

6. See "Methods of Teaching and Learning", below.

7. See "Teachers" below.

the daily programmes of study, students' life at the khalwa⁽¹⁾, and administration and financing of the khalwa.⁽²⁾ And, indeed, in view of these similarities in the major areas identified, the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī could be regarded as an extension to the old traditional khalwas of the riverain region.⁽³⁾

However, the major difference between the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī and the rest of the khalwas of the Sudan seems to have been exemplified in the drastic positive impact of al-Shaykh Bitāī's khalwas on the different aspects of life in his region on the one hand, and the passive, little or even negative effect other khalwas seem to have had in their immediate environments, during the same period,⁽⁴⁾ on the other.

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1. See "Khalwa students", below.
 2. See "Administrative and Financial Aspect of Khalwa Education", below.
 3. The reference could be made to the khalwas of al-Ghubush, Kadabās, al-Majādhīb, and to Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādni, for example.
 4. See the passive impact of the khalwas of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādni on their localities at present as regards their educational roles.

The erection of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī in the region led to unprecedented widespread diffusion of Islamic teachings amongst the community of that region, most of whom were either learning or teaching.⁽¹⁾

In effect, a learning society seems to have emerged - intent on religious education.⁽²⁾

This emerging new society seems to have been influenced and guided by a class of dedicated and pious 'ulamā' - both men and women.⁽³⁾ These have come to constitute the new religiously-oriented leadership of an aspirant people. They seem to have set good examples for their students to follow - in word and deed - and in compliance with the guidance of Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, the high regard they seem to have been enjoying.⁽⁵⁾

As a result of their positive response to the Islamic teachings and guided by the example of their teachers, it appears, new religious people seem to have been born. In evidence of such a phenomenon it was said as a prerequisite for marriage, both men and women would demand, as a proviso, that the other partner

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.

2. The writer's impression.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr and the Deputy of khalwas, al-fakī Ṭāha.

4. See the principles of his teachings, above; al-Hidāya, p.58.

5. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir.

must have studied the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾

Another effect of great importance of the widespread khalwa education in that region seems to have been exemplified in the total eradication of illiteracy in all areas covered by the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāī.⁽²⁾ This achievement resulted from the fact that learning the Qur'ān at the khalwa in the Sudan has been associated, if not preceded, with the acquisition of the ability to read and write.⁽³⁾ Hence, mass khalwa education has resulted in mass literacy at Hamishkorayb.⁽⁴⁾

For a developing country suffering, amongst other things, from the acute problem of illiteracy, both the contribution and the approach of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī in this respect must be of great significance and of far reaching implications.

Perhaps an equally significant achievement of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was the spreading of the Arabic language amongst a non-Arabic speaking people⁽⁵⁾ so that the

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1. Report of Daw al-Bayt, 1970; information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr; Dirāsa Ijtima'īyya, p.7.
 2. The Report of Daw al-Bayt, 1970.
 3. See "Methods of Teaching and Learning", below.
 4. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 5. Al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī has urged his people to embark on learning the Arabic language and use it as a medium of instruction. (Al-Hidāya, p.34).

writer, whose mother tongue is Arabic, could easily communicate with all individuals in the many different villages of the region he visited.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, having recorded on tape all the speeches given by representatives of the villages on the occasion of the visit of the regional governor and members of his government across the region, and having observed the spontaneous responses of the masses to all the speeches spoken in classical Arabic, and their complete comprehension of all that, the writer is sure that the cultural process of Arabization has taken root in that region.

Not only that but the transformation seems to have been taking place at an accelerated rate. According to the regional governor, who had worked as an administrator in the same region twenty years before, he would not have dreamt of finding even a few individuals to communicate with in Arabic; hence to him the change had been beyond all expectations.⁽²⁾

As a direct result of the Islamic orientation and the spread of the Arabic language, the region has become culturally closely linked with the rest of Northern Sudan and the Arab countries.

1. The writer's visit to the region, 1-4 December, 1981.

2. From the speech of al-Sayyid Hāmid 'Alī Shāsh, the Regional Governor, on his visit to Hamishkorayb on 2nd December, 1981. (The writer had the opportunity of visiting the region in the company of the Governor and members of the Regional government.)

This seems to have been exemplified in the increasing number of students of the region who had graduated from the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bītāī, especially from Hamishkorayb, joining the higher Islamic Institution in the Sudan and abroad.⁽¹⁾

The social impact of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bītāī was, likewise, of far reaching effect and importance.

In response to the call of 'Alī Bītāī to the nomads to settle down in order to learn the Qur'ān⁽²⁾, hundreds of the families of the Beja tribes were said to have steadily done so and established homes around the khalwa of Hamishkorayb; and gradually, the village, which was non-existent before the call of 'Alī Bītāī, came into being and expanded to the vast extent that it did.⁽³⁾

In a similar way many other villages and settlements were said to have developed around the khalwas initiated by al-Shaykh 'Alī Bītāī for the Qur'ān and prayer.⁽⁴⁾

1. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhīr Abū Bakr.

2. Al-Hidāya , p.34.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhīr Abū Bakr.

4. Ibid.; in confirmation many of the villages representatives who addressed the Regional Governor and his companions started their speeches attributing the origin of their villages to the khalwas initiated by al-Shaykh 'Alī Bītāī.

Hence, in effect, the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī seem to have represented the nucleus around which the villages grew - thus representing a parallel with the early Sūfī Shaykhs of the Funj period around whose khalwas villages developed.⁽¹⁾

Further, the spread of the Islamic teachings through the khalwas has succeeded in reforming the savage and unruly Beja warriors who lay down their arms and forgot about past hostilities, conflicts and anti-Islamic practices - such as robbery, murder and tribal armed conflicts. Instead they were said to have rendered absolute submission to the laws and authority of Sharī'a as the most effective self-restraining power.⁽²⁾

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1. See pp.531-2 and khalwas under the Funj period.
 2. What Ibn Khaldūn has stated about the restraining power of religion among the insubordinate Arabs seems to have applied to the Beja tribes of Hamishkorayb region:
"...because of their savagery, the Arabs are the least willing of nations to subordinate themselves to each other, as they are rude, proud, ambitious and eager to be the leader. Their individual aspirations rarely coincide. But when there is religion among them, through prophecy or sainthood, then they have some restraining influence in themselves. It is then easy for them to subordinate themselves and to unite as a social organisation." (Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddima, vol.I, p.305).

As a result of their submission to the authority of the Shari'a and under the guidance of 'Alī Bitāī, they were said to have abandoned all undesirable customs, practices and attitudes and adopted new practices and values, as could be substantiated by the following examples.

In accordance with the teachings of Islam to observe tahāra (cleanliness) of body and clothes, all the nomads who pledged to comply with the call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī - men and women - abandoned their previous attitudes and practices and took to keeping their bodies and clothes in a state of tahāra whenever they were performing the rituals of prayer or reading the Qur'an. (1)

Further, to make it feasible for them to keep to the rules of tahāra the men, in particular, abandoned their centuries long tradition of growing long hair (which because of their nomadic mode of life often became filthy) and, instead, had their heads

shaved and for the first time in their lives the masses took to wearing the turbans. (2)

Before the emergence of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī taking revenge for the murder of one's relative from any member(s) of the tribe

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhīr Abū Bakr.
 2. Ibid.; report of Daw al-Bayt, 1970; the writer's observations on his visit to the region.

of the murderer was the established custom of the Beja tribes.⁽¹⁾ Following the teachings of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, however, peace, tolerance and forgiveness seem to have reigned high, and mediation for reconciliation and acceptance of the diyya (compensation) was said to have become the norm.⁽²⁾

The women's customs, too, seem to have undergone great changes.

Before the call of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī women in his region lived under very strict tribal traditions. Marriages, for example, were arranged by men and the girl had no say whatsoever as regards the choice of her husband.⁽³⁾ Now, and in accordance with the teachings of Islam, the girl was said to have been fully consulted.⁽⁴⁾ Not only that, but instead of arranging the marriage on the basis of the dowry (which was simply two cows or L.S. 50-100 paid by the husband), the main condition required by the partners was that each of them must have learnt the Qur'ān.⁽⁵⁾ Hence, a girl would make proviso that her husband must be a religious man.⁽⁶⁾

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr; Dirāsa Ijtimā'īyya, p.8.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.6.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., pp.6-7; also Report of Daw al-Bayt, 1970.

6. Ibid.

Women's appearance was said to have changed too. All females have been wearing Islamic dress.⁽¹⁾

The change in women's customs brought about by the teachings of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī seems to have been also clearly demonstrated in the practices of mourning. In the past when a relative or a leader (tribal or spiritual) died, women, in particular, would wear the dead person's clothes, carry the swords and yell while dancing wildly to the beat of their drums, tearing their dresses, and would continue doing so, mixing with the men, and accompanying the funeral, till the dead person was buried.⁽²⁾ With the rise of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, such a practice of jāhalīyya was abandoned. Instead women would chant the tahlīl and pray to God for forgiveness for the dead.⁽³⁾

Another important achievement resulting from the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāī seems to have been the intertribal unity and the dominance of a spirit of Islamic brotherhood. This seems to have been also a direct response to the direction of their spiritual leader to refrain from prejudices and discrimination towards ethnic groups, and to live in brotherhood.⁽⁴⁾ As an

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1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr; the writer's observations on his visit to the women's khalwas.
 2. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr; Dirāsa Ijtima'īyya, p.7.
 3. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr.
 4. See the principles of the teachings of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, above; al-Hidāya, p.58.

embodiment of this social change, the main khalwa at Hamishkorayb comprised, in 1981, learners belonging to the different tribes of the region and from outside it, such as the Hadendawa, the Banī 'Āmir, the Bishāriyyīn, the Amr'ar, the Artayqa, the Zubaydiyya, the Bāriya, the Khāṣā, the Kamilab and many others to the extent that thirty-six different dialects were said to have been in use at the time - reflecting the variety of ethnic groups.⁽¹⁾

On the economic side, the changes that have taken place as a result of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī seems to have been equally important.

As a result of their settlements around their khalwas, and under the guidance of their spiritual leader, the people of the region were said to have taken to agriculture and trade instead of their previous pastoral activities. Many of them have embarked on land cultivation during the rainy season, and many have been engaged in irrigated agriculture - growing cotton - in the Gash and Tokar delta schemes.⁽²⁾ Members of whole families have been employed to work on the fields, while many others became small traders in the villages or even in such towns as Kasala and Aroma.⁽³⁾

1. Information from the Deputy for khalwas, al-fakī Ṭāhs at Hamishkorayb.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

In response to the guidance of Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī to his followers to depend on God and to develop self-reliance and co-operation, the people seem to have adopted a new and positive attitude towards work in order to earn their living through lawful means and in accordance with Sharī'a.⁽¹⁾ Hence, they seem to have been competing to secure labour for living and to join hands to build their region.

As a result of all that, there has emerged a united religiously orientated enlightened people, conscious of their needs and problems and aspiring, through their efforts, to introduce and sustain an effective change and a comprehensive development - in line with their convictions. They seem to have emerged as a power to reckon with in that corner of the Sudan.

Consequently, they have become the focus of increasing Government attention whether on the regional or central level. This has involved many visits by the President, members of the Government and Government officials.⁽²⁾ In addition, interested groups and individuals too have been attracted to the khalwa region of Hamishkorayb.

On the occasion of such official visits the people of the region seem to have been keen to explain their needs and to

1. See the principles of the teachings of 'Alī Bitāī, above; al-Hidāya, p.58.

2. Information by the Deputy for khalwas.

demand reforms. For example, on the occasion of the recent visit of the Regional Governor and his ministers, the male inhabitants of every village and locality visited gathered in their entirety to welcome the visitors, offer their generous tribal hospitality and then voiced their needs and requests.⁽¹⁾

The general pattern was that, at every gathering, the opening speeches of the spokesmen would focus on the indebtedness of the emergence of the region and its new Muslim society to the Qur'ānic teachings disseminated through the khalwas of their great spiritual leader al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī.⁽²⁾ Their prime demands were the consolidation of their khalwas through governmental financial support in the form of salaries for those working in these institutions - such as the imams (leaders in prayer) and mu'azzins (callers for prayer) of the mosques and the fakīs of the khalwas for men and women.⁽³⁾ Next, came their demands for the provision and consolidation of social services and economic schemes, such as the consolidation of the many primary schools for boys that have been introduced at the initiative of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī⁽⁴⁾, health and veterinary

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1. The writer's visit to the region in the company of the Regional Governor and his team, December 1-4, 1981.
 2. This was referred to at the following places for example: Tuqān, Maman, Tawayayt, Tamākrif, Shīla Hayawt, Tahadai, Talkūk and Hamishkorayb.
 3. The writer's observations on his visit to the region.
 4. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr.

services, piped water, electricity, dams for the streams and agricultural schemes.⁽¹⁾

It was due to the settlement of the nomads induced by al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī that it became feasible to introduce social services - schemes and institutions - in the khalwa region; and has also been realized that such social services have led to the consolidation of the settlement.⁽²⁾

In view of the problems created by the inflow of refugees from neighbouring Eritrea demands for police stations have also been raised.⁽³⁾

What seems of importance was the emergence of the people of the region who were previously existing on the margin of life. This has been exemplified in the consciousness of the needs of their region, the aspiration of all the people for a better life, the voicing of their demands. What seems to have been of even great significance, was the sense of solidarity, brotherhood and unity of purpose and the feeling of self confidence that they could enforce change by creating a good Muslim community through the participation and joint efforts of all members of that region - men and women, young and old, and in accordance with the guidance of their dedicated khalwa teachers, companions and

1. The writer's observations on his visit to the region.

2. See Dirāsa Ijtimā'īyya, p.9.

3. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr.

followers of their great spiritual leader - al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī - and through their network of khalwas that spread all over the region.

It is worth noting that besides his greatest concern for and preoccupation with his khalwas as vehicles for the dissemination of Islamic teachings amongst his people and, hence, transforming them into a better Muslim community, al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was said to have encouraged the introduction of the modern school in his region and urged his people to send their sons to the schools. As a result, a number of primary schools have been established in the region as could be seen from table no.IV below. Not only that but al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was reported to have urged parents to encourage their sons to pursue education to the higher institutions; and he even raised their aspirations to think of producing ministers, ambassadors, 'ulamā', lawyers and holders of the highest degrees - for, according to him, they were people of superior qualities: morality, hospitality, rationality and courage. It was through education, he reminded his people, that others of less noble descent and of inferior attributes could advance and excel them.⁽¹⁾

However, the khalwa seem to have taken such a firm root amongst the people of Hamishkorayb region that it was believed to have been behind almost all the social and economic achievements the region has witnessed.⁽²⁾

Hence, and in contrast to the situation in Northern and Central

1. Al-Hidāya , p.40.

2. See the social and economic changes the region has witnessed, as indicated above.

Sudan, the khalwa - and not the modern school - seems to have become more popular, as could be illustrated by the following indicators.

While the khalwa student population has constantly been on the increase for men⁽¹⁾, as well as for women⁽²⁾, the school student population has been constantly dropping and especially towards the higher grades of the primary school, as has been demonstrated by table no. IV.⁽³⁾ Not only that but the bulk of the khalwa student population was made up of the school age population as could be inferred from table no. V.⁽⁴⁾

Another indicator of the greater popularity of the khalwa is the considerable percentage of adults joining the khalwa - which varies between 20% and 60% for men, as could be illustrated by table no. V;⁽⁵⁾ and the highest proportion of women learners which varies between 50% and 95%, as could be seen from table no. VI.⁽⁶⁾

Certain factors, however, seem to have contributed to the preference and hence the popularity of the khalwa.

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1. See the progressive increase in the student population at the khalwa of men, at Hamishkorayb, above.
 2. See the constant increase in women learners at Hamishkorayb.
 3. See table no. IV.
 4. See table no. V.
 5. See table no. V.
 6. See table no. VI.

Table No. IV

Showing number of primary schools,
date of establishment and the rate of dropout
or the decreasing size of classes (1975-76)

Name of Primary School	Date of Found- ation	P.I	P.II	P.III	P.IV	P.V	P.VI	Total Number of Pupils
Hamishkorayb	1958	31	28	37	25	32	11	164
Tawayayt	1962	93	53	33	18	12	11	220
Tahadāi	1965	39	31	19	16	5	7	117
Talkūk	1966	69	37	29	29	14	19	197
Maman	1966	39	26	11	19	5	-	100
Ilatwayt	1970	26	25	24	23	22	-	120
Darsta	1976	34	17	14	5	4	-	74

Source:

Adapted from tables (1) and (2) from the Report:

Wizārat al-Shu'ūn al-Ijtimā'īyya. Idārat al-Baḥth al-Ijtimā'ī

Dirāsa. Ijtimā'īyya.

'an Rifī al-Hudūd bi Mudīriyyat Kasala

Khartoum, (1976), pp.9-10.

Table No. V

Men khalwas, showing number of khalwas, size of enrolment and average ages of learners (1976)

Name of Village Khalwa	Number of Khalwas	Size of Enrolment	Average ages of learners			
			7-17	18-28	29-39	40-70
Hamishkorayb	1	4,000-6,000	40%	30%	20%	10%
Tawayayt	1	200-250	60%	20%	15%	5%
Tahadāi	1	150-200	80%	15%	3%	2%
Talkūk	1	150-200	40%	40%	10%	10%
Maman	1	120-200	60%	10%	20%	10%
Ilatwayt	1	100-150	70%	20%	5%	5%
Darasta	1	200-250	70%	15%	10%	5%

Source:

Adapted from table (4)

Wizārat al-Shu'ūn al-Ijtimā'iyya.,

Idārat al-Baḥth wa al-Mash al-Ijtimā'i

Dirāsa. Ijtimā'iyya.

'an Rīfī al-Hudūd bi Mudīriyyat Kasala

Khartoum, 1976, p.16.

Table No.VI

Showing the number of women's khalwas, the size of enrolment and the average ages of learners (1976)

Name of Village Khalwa	Number of Khalwas	Size of Enrolment	Average ages of learners			
			10-14	15-25	26-36	37 +
Hamishkorayb*	30	3,000	20%	40%	30%	10%
Tawayayt	35	250 +	25%	50%	20%	5%
Tahadāi	12	200-250	10%	45%	40%	5%
Talkūk	6	150 +	10%	50%	20%	10%
Maman	8	180-200	15%	40%	40%	5%
Ilatwayt	6	180-200	10%	60%	20%	10%
Darasta	13	150-200	5%	55%	30%	10%

Source:

Adapted from the Report of:

Wizārat al-Shu'ūn al-Ijtimā'īyya

Idārat al-Baḥth al-Ijtimā'ī

Dirāsa Ijtimā'īyya 'an Rīfī al-Hudūd bi Mudīriyyat Kasalā

Khartoum (1976), table 5, p.17.

- * Both the number of khalwas and the size of enrolment has been amended in accordance with the data supplied to the writer by al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr who was in charge of the women's Khalwa.

The school was a relative late-comer;⁽¹⁾ by the time the school was introduced, the khalwa had already taken root and had been in effect the basis of the settled communities of the region and associated with their transformation for the better.

The flexibility of the khalwa of study seems to have better suited the pattern life of the people of the region than the rigid nature of the school.

In the rural areas of the Sudan the children are usually active participants in the economic activities of the region. They help their parents in cultivation, animal rearing and in fetching water from wells or streams or in collecting firewood,⁽²⁾ and the more they progress in age, the more they are engaged in the pursuits of their parents - hence the increase in the dropouts from school towards the end of the primary school.⁽³⁾

Another reason for the dropout at that stage seems to lie in the fact that the people of the region used to get married at an early age - when reaching the stage of adolescence, for both boys and girls.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, towards the end of the primary school the

-
1. Compare the beginning of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī with the introduction of the primary schools, as indicated by the dates of their foundation, table no. IV.
 2. Dirāsa. Ijtimā'īyya , p.10.
 3. See table no. IV.
 4. Dirāsa Ijtimā'īyya , p.6.

the boys would be tempted to abandon their schools in order to engage in gainful employment and get prepared for marriage.

Moreover, the environment did not have as yet modern sector employment or post primary institutions of education to act as incentives to induce the learners, and their parents, to aspire for higher education and salaried jobs, as was the case in Northern and Central Sudan.⁽¹⁾

In contrast, the khalwa seem to have matched well with the conditions of people at this stage: unlike the school, and ^{its} because of/individualized method of instruction⁽²⁾ it has made it feasible for the learner to interrupt his study whenever he needed and to resume it from where he had stopped.⁽³⁾ Thus the khalwa learners could combine study and work (whether for the parents or for himself). Unlike the school, the khalwa had no age limit, hence many of the learners joined it at an older age than would have been allowed at school, and continued their study at the khalwa when they were adults⁽⁴⁾ - and most of them married⁽⁵⁾ - and, it should be added, that the khalwa was the

-
1. See above how under the Condominium period the school started to be used as the gateway for modern sector employment - to the disadvantage of the khalwa.
 2. See Methods of teaching and learning, below.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See table no. V.
 5. Information from the Deputy of khalwas, al-fakī Tāha.

only educational institution that was open for adults in the region.⁽¹⁾

Another important factor contributing to the preference of the khalwa to the school in Hamishkorayb region was the fact that the khalwa, unlike the school, provided its learners with meals and accommodation.⁽²⁾

the khalwa

Further, the extra-long working day of/ and the availability of living facilities seem to have fitted well with the custom of the Beja tribe in the region according to which men were not allowed to return home during the day.⁽³⁾ Although from their religious study they came to understand that their custom was not based on Sharī'ah yet they seem to have found it more convenient to spend the hours of the day at the khalwa.

Young girls, up to the age of ten, were not sent for study but, like other children, they would usually help their mothers by collecting firewood, fetching drinking water or looking after animals.⁽⁴⁾ Since there was no girls' school in the region the women khalwa was the only educational institution open for women in the region - hence the popularity of the khalwa among women, as has been illustrated by table no.VI.⁽⁵⁾

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1. The khalwa was open for all ages, see tables no. v & vi
 2. Such facilities are provided by all large khalwa centres; see khalwa centres above, including that of Hamishkorayb.
 3. Dirāsa Ijtimā'iyya , p.6.
 4. Ibid., p.18.
 5. See table no.VI.

Thus the great positive changes that have taken place all over the region have been constantly referred to as examples of what the khalwa could achieve - given the right conditions.⁽¹⁾

Now, in view of the success of the khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī as educational institutions and their far reaching impact on all aspects of life in the region, and even outside it, one would wonder about the main factors or forces that have led to these marvellous khalwa achievements in that part of the Sudan, and in contrast to the far less significant social impact of the present day khalwas in their localities in the other parts of the Sudan,⁽²⁾ and even of the handful of khalwas that had existed before the movement of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, in the same region.⁽³⁾

The answer seems to lie in the fact that economic and social

1. Reference could be made to almost all reports on individuals or groups who have visited the region, in particular to the report of Daw' al Bayt, 1970, Dirāsa. Ijtimā'īyya ; speeches of the Regional Governor Kasalā on his visit to the region and the speeches of representatives of the villages visited. (The writer's observations).
2. Reference to the present day khalwas in North and Central Sudan - see above.
3. These are the khalwas of Samarandawab tribe at Awdī, Arīdī, Arfīn, Sallom, Wagayg and Talaknayb and which have been in existence since the Turco-Egyptian period (see above).

conditions were ripe for change. However, such change needed a charismatic figure to bring it about. Al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī was such a charismatic figure. Inspired himself by his profound involvement with Islam, he, like the early Sūfī saints before him, was able to revive religion to bring about this change.

He successfully used the religious educational institution of the khalwa to combat ignorance and to spread and promote people's knowledge of Islam as a socially cohesive force, and he inspired many able and dedicated teachers (men and women) to carry on his message.

PART III

ANALYSIS OF THE KHALWA AS
AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

CHAPTER ONE

KHALWA TEACHERS

A. Categories of Khalwa Teachers and their Titles

As could be seen from the khalwa surveys mentioned above - and indeed as could be inferred from the biographies noted in al-Tabaqāt, there seem to have been three categories of khalwa teachers in the Sudan, especially during the Funj and the Turco-Egyptian periods. These were: the Ṣūfī Shaykhs or saints, the teachers of 'ilm and the teachers of the Qur'ān. Further elaboration seems to be needed:

a) The Ṣūfī Shaykhs - the saints

As alluded to above, owing to the dominance of Ṣūfism during the Funj era, almost every teacher was a follower of the Ṣūfī Path, or was one of those who combined 'ilm and Ṣūfism. However, it was as miracle-working saints with reputations for sanctity - that is, as awliyā', sing. walī (saints) that they won the loyalty of the majority of the Sudanese.⁽¹⁾ The representatives of this group were the Ṣūfī Shaykhs who distinguished themselves from the ranks of teachers by the manifestation of baraka and karamāt, and who became heads of decentralised Ṣūfī tawā'if, and were, in effect, founders of Ṣūfī dynasties. The following could be cited as representatives

1. Keddi, Scholars, Saints and Sufis, London, 1972, p.368.

of this category:

- al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb;⁽¹⁾
- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Hamīm;⁽²⁾
- al-Shaykh al-Ḥasan b. Ḥasūna;⁽³⁾
- al-Shaykh Khūjalī b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān;⁽⁴⁾
- al-Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Bān al-Naqā;⁽⁵⁾
- al-Shaykh Badwi Abū Dulayq.⁽⁶⁾

The above mentioned Shaykhs were professional Ṣūfīs who were more preoccupied with the Ṣūfī activities than with anything else.

The common title which has been used consistently throughout the ages in reference to each member of such a group was the term "al-Shaykh". With very few exceptions, the title "al-Shaykh" was used as denoting, not temporal power, but the spiritual authority of the superior of a religious order.⁽⁷⁾

The term al-khalīfa (the successor) was also often used to denote the superior of the Ṣūfī Order, when in office.⁽⁸⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.50-66.

2. Ibid., pp.317-23.

3. Ibid., pp.134-49.

4. Ibid., pp.191-202.

5. Ibid., pp.239-44.

6. Ibid., pp.116-24.

7. MacMichael, vol.II, p.273.

8. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.75, 218, 239, 255, 323, 320 and 352.

The same trend seems to have survived across the ages, except during the short period of the Mahdiyya when all titles - together with Sūfism itself - were prohibited.⁽¹⁾

During the Turco-Egyptian rule, as representatives of this group, the following could be mentioned:

- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Ubayd b. Badr, the founder of Umm Ḍawwan Bān;⁽²⁾
- al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ja‘alī, the founder of the khalwa of Kadabās;⁽³⁾ and
- al-Shaykh al-Qurashī b. al-Zayn, the founder of Ṭayba Qurashī.⁽⁴⁾

Today, the same trend has been perpetuated, as exemplified in the Sūfī Shaykhs of the same khalwas mentioned above:

- al-Shaykh Yusuf b. ‘Umar of Umm Ḍawwan Bān;⁽⁵⁾
- al-Shaykh Ḥājj Ḥamad of Kadabās;⁽⁶⁾

1. See the "Teachings of al-Mahdī", pp/27-130, above.

2. See the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān, above.

3. See the khalwa of Kadabās, above.

4. See "The Mahdiyya Period".

5. The writer's visit to the khalwa of Umm Ḍawwan Bān, in November 1981.

6. The writer's visit to the khalwas of Kadabās in November 1981.

- al-Shaykh Ibrahīm al-Dūsūqī of Tayba.⁽¹⁾

It is worth noting that some of the early Sūfī Shaykhs used to engage in actual instruction of Shari'a subjects - besides being engaged in their Sūfī activities.⁽²⁾ Today, however, almost none of the Sūfī Shaykhs is engaged in actual teaching at the khalwa level. Each Shaykh seems to have restricted his efforts to the overall administration of his khalwa complex, in addition to guiding his followers of the Order and practising his Sūfī activities.⁽³⁾

The follower or disciple of the Shaykh in the Sūfī Path was called al-faqīr, pl. fuqarā' (poor in the sight of God)⁽⁴⁾; or al-huwār, pl. hayrān,⁽⁵⁾ or al-murīd, pl. al-murīdīn,⁽⁶⁾ or tilmīdh, pl. talāmidha.⁽⁷⁾

b(1) The teachers of 'ilm

The next category of khalwa teachers were those engaged in

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1. The writer's visit to the khalwa of Tayba in November 1981.
 2. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.252, 261-2; see also the khalwas of Umm Dawwan Bān, Kadabās, for example.
 3. See the khalwas of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, above.
 4. MacMichael, vol.II, p.273; Hillelson, JRAS, p.664; al-Tabaqāt, pp.135, 276 and 302.
 5. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.136, 254 and 317.
 6. Ibid., pp.252 and 302.
 7. Ibid., pp.197, 305 and 317.

the instruction of 'ilm - teaching the various subjects or books of 'ilm - at the second stage of khalwa education. Although many of these teachers were also recognized as prominent Ṣūfī Shaykhs, yet all of them were more preoccupied with the dissemination of the Sharī'a subjects than with the Ṣūfī activities.

As representatives of such groups during the Funj and Turco-Egyptian periods, reference could be made to the following:

- al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-'Arakī;⁽¹⁾
- al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir;⁽²⁾
- al-Shaykh al-Zayn Ṣughayrūn;⁽³⁾
- al-faqīh 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥamad al-Aghbash;⁽⁴⁾
- al-faqīh Arbāb al-Khishn;⁽⁵⁾
- al-faqīh Dayfallāh b. 'Alī;⁽⁶⁾
- al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Azraq;⁽⁷⁾ and
- al-faqīh al-Amin al-Suwaylih.⁽⁸⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.345.

2. Ibid., p.252.

3. Ibid., pp.74-6.

4. Ibid., p.281.

5. Ibid., pp.100-1.

6. Ibid., p.246.

7. Founder of the khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq at al-Gadaref, after the dispersal of al-Majādhīb by the Turco-Egyptian invasion 1820 (see "The Turco-Egyptian Period", above.)

8. Kutranj, pp.56-7.

The common term for the teacher of 'ilm was al-faqīh; however, out of reverence to the Sūfī status of some of the fuqahā' who also enjoyed a high reputation as Sūfī Shaykhs, the term "Shaykh" was used.⁽¹⁾

b(ii) The assistant of the teacher of 'ilm

It seems that the teachers of 'ilm were assisted, in their teaching functions, by their outstanding students. Al-Tabaqāt makes several references to such a phenomenon as exemplified in the teaching assistants who were in charge of "majlis al-taftiḥa".⁽²⁾ Examples of persons occupying these posts are

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1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.359, 291-2.
 2. Majlis al-taftiḥa was the introductory session to the new lesson of fiqh, for example, where the person in charge - usually the most versed student in that subject or book - would read the text before the teacher commented on it (al-Tabaqāt, p.77, n.17; Abd al-Majid, vol.II, p.117).

given below:

- Madanī al-Ḥajar b. 'Umar b. Sarḥān was chosen by his cousin al-Shaykh al-Zayn to be in charge of majlis al-taftīha.⁽¹⁾
- Ibrāhīm al-Ḥajar shared with his brother al-Shaykh al-Zayn in teaching - by holding majlis al-taftīha.⁽²⁾
- Abū al-Ḥasan Ṣāliḥ al-'Uḏī was put in charge of majlis al-taftīha by al-faqīh Ballāl.
- Muḥammad b. Madanī al-Nāṭiq chose to chair majlis al-taftīha.⁽⁴⁾
- 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Madanī (Abū Nayrān) was in charge of majlis al-taftīha.⁽⁵⁾

Under the Mahdiyya the teaching of 'ilm books was prohibited for they were accused of confusing the masses and concealing Orthodox Islam.⁽⁶⁾

Under the Condominium rule, when conditions permitted, some of the khalwas resumed their traditional teachings and Ṣūfī activities and retained the same classification of teachers and

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.361.

2. Ibid., p.77.

3. Ibid., p.78.

4. Ibid., p.354.

5. Ibid., p.286.

6. See the "Teachings of al-Mahdī", pp.127-130.

their titles.⁽¹⁾ Of the few khalwas which resumed the teaching of 'ilm were the khalwas of Umm Dawwan Bān,⁽²⁾ and al-Sūfī al-Azraq.⁽³⁾

However, the common term for the teacher of 'ilm (as well as of the Qur'ān) came to be increasingly known as al-fakī⁽⁴⁾. The assistant - the person in charge of majlis al-taftiḥa - was called al-muqābil (the opposite to the teacher).⁽⁵⁾

At present, the teaching of 'ilm has been taken over by al-ma'āhid al-'ilmīyya (the religious institutes) and consequently it has almost disappeared from the traditional khalwas.⁽⁶⁾ Hence, in effect, the category of 'ilm teachers at the khalwa has, as a result, also almost disappeared. However, at the very few khalwas which still provided courses of 'ilm - such as Hamishkorayb, and Kadabās - the 'ilm lessons have been conducted by the fakīs and shaykhāt (at Hamishkorayb for men and women respectively)⁽⁷⁾ and by a murshid dīnī (religious guide) such as

1. Irshād, p.65.

2. Ibid.; see the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, above.

3. Interview with ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq, at his khalwa, al-Sūfī al-Azraq, November 1981.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.; see also 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.17.

6. See al-Bāqir, "Religious Education", pp.76-89.

Y. al-Khalīfa and Khāṭir, p.2.

7. See the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāi at Hamishkorayb, above.

that of Kadabās.⁽¹⁾

c) The third category of khalwa teachers was that of the teachers of the Qur'ān - at the basic or the elementary stage.⁽²⁾

The common term used by the author of al-Tabaqāt to denote the Qur'ān teacher was also al-faqīh.⁽³⁾ One explanation for this indiscriminate usage of the title could be justified by the fact that many of the teachers of the Qur'ān, noted in al-Tabaqāt, seem to have attained the academic status of faqīh - such as al-faqīh 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash⁽⁴⁾, al-faqīh Naṣr al-Tarjamī,⁽⁵⁾ al-faqīh 'Isa b. Kanu,⁽⁶⁾ al-faqīh Basbar,⁽⁷⁾ al-faqīh Qaqūm b. Ibrāhīm b. Barri,⁽⁸⁾ and al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd.⁽⁹⁾

However, the term "al-fakī" seems to have also been in use -

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1. See the khalwa of Kadabās, above.
 2. See the Qur'ān stage at the khalwa of al-Ghubush, above and khalwas at present.
 3. See "Teachers Academic Qualifications ...", below.
 4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.280.
 5. Ibid., pp.90-91.
 6. Ibid., p.278.
 7. Ibid., p.110.
 8. Ibid., p.314.
 9. Ibid., p.282.

denoting the Qur'ān teacher.⁽¹⁾ On his visit to al-Damer, and in particular to the khalwa of al-Majādhīb, Burckhardt (1814) refers to the principal teacher or the chief spiritual leader as al-fakī al-kabīr.⁽²⁾

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule the term al-fakī was often mentioned as the title of the teacher of the khalwa of the Qur'ān.⁽³⁾ According to al-Shaykh Bābikīr Badrī, the khalwa teacher was called "al-fakī" - whether he was teaching the Qur'ān, like his teacher al-fakī al-Karrās, or whether he was a teacher of 'ilm, like his teacher al-fakī al-Azayriq, at Wad Madanī.⁽⁴⁾

Since then, that is, throughout the Mahdiyya, the Condominium rule and the present periods, the main teaching subject at the

-
1. As to the origin of the term al-fakī, there seems to have been a consensus that it has been a corruption of the term al-faqīh, or a confusion of the words al-faqīh (the scholar) and al-faqīr (the poor in the sight of God). (See 'Ābdīn, p.19; Lane, vol.II, p.74; MacMichael, vol.II, p.273; Hillelson, JRAS, p.664; Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.140, Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141.)
 2. Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia, p.267.
 3. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141.
 4. Badrī, vol.II, pp. 20, 24.

khalwa has been the Qur'ān, with the ability to read and write as a means to that end.⁽¹⁾ Hence, the dominant category has been that of the Qur'ān teachers who have been universally known as the fakīs, assisted by their senior students - the 'urafā' or the Shaykhs of the halqas.⁽²⁾

In a similar way the women khalwas of the Qur'ān have been run by Shaykhāt, sing. Shaykha, of the Qur'ān (women teachers of the Qur'ān) - assisted also by halqa-shaykhāt.⁽³⁾

However, the large riverain khalwa centres have been revived under the successors of the founders of the original khalwas and have now established themselves as another distinct influential category of Sūfī Shaykhs or khulafā', sing. khalīfa, (successor(s)) over their khalwa centres, in charge of the tasks of overall management and the guidance of their followers in the Sūfī Path - assisted by a number of deputies.⁽⁴⁾

1. See "Methods of Teaching the Qur'ān", below.

2. Ibid.

3. See the khalwa of Hamishkorayb for women, below.

4. The reference could be made to the khalwas of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Abū Qurūn, Tayba; see khalwa administration, below.

B. The academic qualifications and calibre of khalwa teachers

For a better understanding of the academic qualifications' and calibre of khalwa teachers it seems essential to take into account the external and internal conditions that seem to have had impact on the education of teachers and their calibre.

Externally, as has been alluded to above, at the time of the emergence of the first Muslim state in the Sudan - the Funj kingdom of Sennar - at the beginning of the 10th/16th century, the Muslim world around it was passing through a long period of cultural decline and stagnation. Such a situation had a direct bearing on the teachers' calibre - for it was from these Islamic lands, at the time, that the Sudan received almost all of its pioneer teachers and 'ulamā' who laid the foundation for its Islamic cultural heritage.

Internally, there were major environmental and social problems that seem to have hampered the efforts of teachers and drastically affected the calibre of the future generation of teachers. As alluded to before, the centuries-long processes of slow Arabization and Islamization - in the absence of the 'ulamā' - resulted in a superficial state of Islam among the first

generations of Muslim.⁽¹⁾ In effect the Sudan, at the time, was said to have been passing through a long transitory stage when the older religion, Christianity - [and the indigenous institutions] were fading out, and the new religion - Islam - [and its institutions] were struggling to take root.⁽²⁾

Further, the pioneer teachers had to contend with the problems of harsh environmental conditions, of backward means of communications in a vast country, and with the more relevant problems of inducing the nomadic Arab tribes to settle down; of communication with the indigenous non-Arabic speakers and disseminating the genuine Islamic teachings - employing meagre means and equipment that were at their disposal at the time.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, the pioneer teachers of the Funj period - as could be evidenced from the survey of the khalwa centres of the time⁽⁴⁾ - seem to have succeeded in laying down the solid foundation for the badly needed Islamic teachings and their institutions. The popularity of their khalwas, and the extent of their spread seems to have been indicative of the success of their efforts.⁽⁵⁾

1. See "the pre-Funj era", above.

2. The Arabs, p.178.

3. Such conditions prevailed, later, in Eastern Sudan, in the khalwa region of Hamishkorayb (see khalwas of 'Alī Bitāī).

4. See khalwa centres of the Funj era of Mahmūd al-'Arakī, Sons of Jābir, Ṣughayrūn, etc.

5. See the khalwas of Ṣughayrūn and al-Ghubush, above.

However, by time, and as a result of the internal and external factors mentioned above, the intellectual efforts of those 'ulamā' and teachers seem to have been bogged down and to have degenerated in a state of cultural stagnation that was perpetuated as a state tradition handed down from generation to generation almost without any improvement.

Commenting on such a state of affairs, Hillelson says,

"the general level of scholarship (during the Funj era) never amounted to very much, and we have to think of these scholars as men of a particularly dark age, endeavouring with the scanty means at their disposal to serve the cause of religion and learning in an environment not far removed from barbarism."⁽¹⁾

At any rate, the khalwa teachers seem to have reached the height of their intellectual calibre by the 11th/17th century when the second and third generations of the pioneer scholars of the Funj era united 'ilm and Sūfism and established themselves as teachers over their khalwa centres and emerged as scholars of relatively high intellectual status and made positive

1. Hillelson, JRAS, p.666.

contributions to the khalwa teachings.⁽¹⁾

These subsequent generations of khalwa teachers, however, not only continued on the trodden lines of their predecessors but even came to depend more and more on local training, study and production.⁽²⁾

1. Reference is made here to prominent teachers of that period such as:

al-Shaykh al-Zayn Ṣughayrūn (al-Tabaqāt, pp.74-6; see also the khalwa centre of Ṣughayrūn, above);

al-faqīh ‘Alī b. Barri (al-Tabaqāt, pp.294-8);

al-faqīh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd (al-Tabaqāt, pp.282-5);

al-faqīh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥamad al-Aghbash (al-Tabaqāt, p.281)

al-Shaykh Dafa‘allāh al-‘Arakī (al-Tabaqāt, pp.206-10);

al-faqīh Ibrāhīm al-Faradī and his son al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Qaddāl (al-Tabaqāt, pp.80-4);

al-faqīh Arbāb b. ‘Awn (al-Tabaqāt, pp.100-101);

al-faqīh ‘Ammār b. Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ (al-Tabaqāt, pp.260-3);

al-faqīh Mālīk b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ḥamadtū (al-Tabaqāt, pp.351-2);

al-faqīh Mudawwī Akaddawī al-Misrī (al-Tabaqāt, pp.102-4);

al-faqīh Dayfallāh b. ‘Alī (al-Tabaqāt, pp.246-7).

2. Ibid.

From now on, with few exceptions, almost all the descendants and successors of these khalwa founders and teachers seem to have restricted themselves and their students to local study - and to have been followed by generations of teachers. A quick survey of the biographies of these scholars in al-Tabaqāt would further illustrate the point.⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, tracing the notes on the scholars of consecutive generations in al-Tabaqāt shows clearly that almost every one of such teachers had studied the same material as a student and then passed it down to his own students when he became a teacher.

This could be demonstrated by the fact that most of the teachers - especially teachers of 'ilm - were reported to have studied, in addition to the memorization of the Qur'ān, primarily the same two standard textbooks of the Malikite fiqh - Khalīl and al-Risāla and, then, to have followed the Ṣūfī path, under the guidance of a renowned Shaykh.⁽²⁾

Teachers of the Qur'ān, too, were reported to have followed the same or a similar course.

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1. See the khalwas of Ṣughayrūn, Suwār al-Dhahab, al-Ghubush, above.
 2. Ibid. See also the examples of al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī (al-Tabaqāt, p.253); of al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (al-Tabaqāt, p.261); and of al-faqīh Dayfallāh b. 'Alī (al-Tabaqāt, p.246).

As referred to, in the introductory note of al-Tabaqāt, the pioneer teacher of the Qur'ānic sciences ('ulūm al-Qur'ān)⁽¹⁾ in the Funj kingdom was al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Isā Suwār al-Dhahab⁽²⁾, who was said to have first learnt the Qur'ān, studied khalīl under his father, then was instructed in ahkām al-Qur'ān (Qur'ānic rules of correct readings) and initiated in the Sūfī Path by al-Tilmisānī al-Maghrabī.⁽³⁾ He was also said to have studied ahkām al-Qur'ān under Muḥammad al-Qināwī al-Misrī.⁽⁴⁾

His teachings in the Qur'ānic sciences were reported to have been spread by his students such as the renowned teachers of the Qur'ān and its sciences - 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash, and his descendants afterwards at their famous khalwa centre at al-Ghubush, and by their students, too.⁽⁵⁾

The other famous teachers of the Qur'ān and its sciences - from the first generations of the Funj era - were al-faqīh Abū Sinaynah al-Tarjamī, a student of Suwār al-Dhahab who flourished at Arbajī,⁽⁶⁾ and al-faqīh 'Isā b. Kanu.⁽⁷⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.42.

2. See the khalwa centre of Suwār al-Dhahab, above.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.42.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.348; see the khalwa centre of Suwār al-Dhahab, above.

5. See the khalwa centre of al-Ghubush, above.

6. Al-Tabaqāt, p.42.

7. Ibid., p.278.

It was through these pioneer teachers and their students afterwards that the Qur'ānic sciences were said to have spread in the Sudan, and that the same material was studied by the subsequent generations.⁽¹⁾

Al-Tabaqāt gives many similar references to teachers of the Qur'ān and/or 'ilm who seem to have followed almost the same pattern of study in order to qualify as recognized teachers in their fields of interest.⁽²⁾

It seems clear from the academic preparation and practice for the teaching profession under the Funj rule as the editor of al-Tabaqāt has rightly indicated that the highest objective of the Sudanese scholars at the time was exemplified in "memorizing the Qur'ān by heart; study of al-Risāla, Khalīl, introductory of al-Sanūsī in tawhīd [and/or the study of ahkām al-Qur'ān] and following the Sūfī Path".⁽³⁾

In addition to the above we find references to individual

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.154-5, 211.

2. Ibid., pp.290-91.

3. Ibid., p.6.

teachers who seem to have been more ambitious than the average scholar and hence had more access to a variety of subjects and, in turn, emerged as teachers of several courses of 'ilm.

Reference is made here to famous scholars of exceptional calibre such as al-faqīh 'Ammār b. 'Abd al-Ḥafīz,⁽¹⁾ 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ṣālih b. Bān al-Naqa⁽²⁾ and his son Ḥasan.⁽³⁾

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule almost the same calibre and qualifications of teachers of the Funj period seem generally to have been sustained. Reference could be made in this respect to teachers of the Qur'ān such as al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'alī at Kadabās (d. 1899)⁽⁴⁾, al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-'Ubayd b. Badr at Umm Dawwan Bān (d.1302/1885),⁽⁵⁾ al-fakī Ibrāhīm b. Ahmad 'Isā at Kutrānj (d. 1295 H)⁽⁶⁾; and to the higher calibre of the teachers of 'ilm (or 'ilm and the Qur'ān) such as al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khayr, teacher of al-Mahdī at al-Ghubush,⁽⁷⁾ al-faqīh al-'ālim Ahmad al-Badwī (d.1286/1869) at Kutrānj⁽⁸⁾, Muḥammad Ahmad al-Mahdī,(d.1302/1885).⁽⁹⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.260-263.

2. Ibid., pp.291-2.

3. Ibid., pp.189-190.

4. See the khalwa centre of Kadabās, above.

5. See the khalwa centre of Umm Dawwan Bān.

6. See Kutrānj, p.55.

7. See the khalwa centre of al-Ghubush, above.

8. See Kutrānj, p.73.

9. See "The Mahdiyya Period".

Under the Mahdiyya short-lived rule, the teaching of traditional 'ilm together with the practices of Sūfism were reported to have been restricted.⁽¹⁾ Hence the academic qualifications of the ordinary khalwa faqīh was drastically reduced. In effect, the academic preparations of the khalwa teacher were restricted mainly to the teaching of the Qur'ān (with reading and writing and al-Mahdī's prayers (Rātib al-Madī)).⁽²⁾

Under the Condominium rule, as a result of the hostile attitude of the regime against the traditional khalwas and their teachers, both were discredited, and hence fell in disfavour, to the advantage of the newly established modern kuttāb and subgrade schools and their teachers.⁽³⁾

Consequently, the teaching function of the traditional khalwas that persisted was almost reduced to teaching of the Qur'ān, and the main qualification of their teachers to its memorization⁽⁴⁾ and how to teach it.

1. See Attitudes towards, and developments in khalwa education under al-Mahdiyya rule, above.

2. Ibid.

3. See the "Attitudes ... towards khalwas under the 'Condominium period", above.

4. Information from al-khalīfa al-Rayyāh, the khalwa Shaykh of Wad al-Fādnī, al-fakī 'Alī, Kadabās.

However, some of the khalwas, like Umm Dawwan Bān, taught 'ilm too (Irshād, p.65).

On the other hand, as a result of conversion of many of the traditional khalwas to khalwas nizāmiyya during the 1920s and 1930s, many of their previously traditional fakīs were exposed to short retraining programmes, where they were exposed to short-course methods of teaching new subjects that were introduced into the khalwa nizāmiyya - such as Arabic, arithmetic and elementary fiqh.⁽¹⁾

When the policy of conducting the khalwa nizāmiyya was abandoned by the Government, the teachers' academic qualification at the few khalwas that survived was again restricted to the traditional teaching and memorization of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

The teaching of 'ilm, on the other hand, was organized and disseminated privately by qualified 'ulamā' first at their homes⁽³⁾ and then by Government sponsored 'ulamā' from a central specialized institution, al-Ma'had al-'Ilmī of Omdurman⁽⁴⁾, which has evolved from the old mosque of that city and now has eventually been transformed into Omdurman Islamic university.⁽⁵⁾

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1. See Attitudes towards traditional khalwas under the Condominium period", above. See also the khalwa centres of al-Ghubush, and that of al-Majādhīb, above.
 2. Information from al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl, al-Fāshir; and Hasan 'Abd al-Mājid, al-Fāshir, 7th December 1981.
 3. Hamad al-Nīl, p.15.
 4. Ibid., p.16.
 5. Ibid., p.28.

As far as the teachers' academic qualifications were concerned, the most prominent at this time seem to have been those of the khalwa of Kutrānj and its branch mosque-khalwa al-Masīd. Here, it was reported that a considerable number of these two institutions had their study at al-Azhar and were granted ijāzat by the 'ulamā' there.⁽¹⁾ The khalwa of Kutrānj, it is worth mentioning, was established in the 10th/16th century by al-Shaykh 'Isā b. Bushāra al-Anṣārī - who migrated from Medina studied at al-Azhar and finally settled in the Sudan and established his mosque-khalwa at Kutrānj for the teaching of 'ilm and the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

His khalwa continued to flourish under his descendants throughout the Funj, the Turco-Egyptian, the Mahdiyya and the Condominium periods.⁽³⁾ It reached its golden age, it seems, under the Turco-Egyptian rule when many of its teachers received their study at al-Azhar in Cairo⁽⁴⁾, and the mother khalwa itself

1. Irshād, pp.32-39, 42-54; BSS, pp.86-101.

2. Irshād, p.8.

3. See Irshād; Kutrānj (for detailed study).

4. Even before the Turco-Egyptian period al-Shaykh Ahmad b. 'Isā (d.1239 A.H.) was said to have spent about twenty years of study at al-Azhar, and when he came back he greatly revived the khalwa teachings at Kutrānj (Irshād, pp.16-18). The following had their studies at al-Azhar during the Turco-Egyptian regime (Irshād, pp.28-55): al-faqīh Ahmad al-Badawī (d.1286 A.H.), Muḥammad Ahmad al-Badwī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ahmad al-Badwī (d.1344/1924), 'Abdallāh b. Ahmad al-Badwī (d. in Cairo), al-Amīn b. Ahmad al-Badwī (d. at al-Azhar).

extended its teaching services to two other branches - at al-Masīd (established 1256)⁽¹⁾ and at al-Mas'ūdiyya (flourished under al-fakī Bābikir Ahmad al-Badwī d. 1297 A.H.).⁽²⁾

At any rate the khalwa teachers - or the 'ulamā' of Kutrānj and al-Masīd - during the Turco-Egyptian period - seem to have had a great impact on the khalwa teachers of the period who happened to receive their studies in 'ilm at their hands.⁽³⁾

1. Irshad, p.20.

2. Ibid., pp.55-6.

3. Reference could be made here to the following prominent khalwa teachers:

- al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Azraq, founder of the khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq at al-Gadaref, who studied under al-faqīh Ahmad b. 'Īsā (d.1239 A.H.) (BSS, p.61);
- al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Khayr, teacher of Muḥammad Ahmad (later al-Mahdī) at al-Ghubush, who received his studies at the hands of al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Azraq, at al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq (see the khalwa of al-Ghubush);
- al-faqīh Muḥammad Ahmad (al-Mahdī) who studied at the khalwa of Kutrānj under al-faqīh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Ṣuwaylīh, (Irshad, p.23);
- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-'Ubayd b. Badr, who studied under al-faqīh Ahmad b. 'Īsā al-Anṣārī, (Irshād, p.66);
- al-faqīh Badwī Abū Ṣafīyya who studied under al-faqīh Ahmad b. 'Īsā, also, and established a khalwa at al-Obeid, (Irshād, p.17).

In the provinces, branch mosque institutes for teaching 'ilm were also established during the Condominium period.⁽¹⁾ Thus, teaching of 'ilm, with the exception of a few khalwas, was generally separated from khalwas.⁽²⁾

Under the present period of national rule (since Independence) the revived khalwas have been concerned primarily with the teaching of the Qur'ān together with the ability to read and write. The main academic qualification of their teachers, likewise, has mainly been reduced to the memorization of the Qur'ān, learnt at a khalwa.⁽³⁾ A few khalwas, however, seem to have been maintaining, relatively, higher standards through doses of 'ilm lessons - such as that of Hamishkorayb⁽⁴⁾ and Kadabās.⁽⁵⁾

This could be supported by recent statistical surveys. According to a survey carried out in 1976, 88% of khalwa teachers were themselves graduates of the Qur'ānic khalwas⁽⁶⁾ - that is, they learnt the Qur'ān by heart and acquired the ability to read and write and to teach (at the khalwa).⁽⁷⁾ The remainder had post-khalwa education at such institutions as Sharwānī Qur'ānic

1. Ḥamad al-Nīl, p.17.

2. Such as Hamishkorayb and Kadabās.

3. See below.

4. See the khalwa of Hamishkorayb, above.

5. See the khalwa of Kadabās, above.

6. NUR, p.12.

7. See "Methods of Teaching", below.

Institute, Alti and al-Manqil - all of intermediate level, and from the secondary section of al-Ma'had al-'Ilmi, Omdurman.⁽¹⁾

In 1979, however, another survey conducted on khalwas revealed that 92% of the khalwa teachers had only khalwa education while 8% had elementary, secondary general religious education.⁽²⁾

Further, from his survey to the khalwas in the different parts of the country in 1981, the writer has found that the following were the main qualifications of the khalwa faki:

- a) To be a hāfiz (to have learnt the Qur'ān thoroughly well by heart).⁽³⁾
- b) To have mastered reading and writing the Qur'ān according to one of the two main Qur'ānic readings followed in the Sudan (al-Duri's or Warsh's).⁽⁴⁾
- c) To have mastered al-ramya to a group of learners of different standards (in learning the Qur'ān).⁽⁵⁾

1. NUR, p.12.

2. NCSW, p.11.

3. This was the main requirement; however some of the teachers of the village khalwas in Darfur are not hafaza. At any rate their teaching was restricted to Juz' 'Amma.

4. See "Subjects and Books", below for further information on these two readings.

5. See "Methods of teaching and learning", below.

- d) To be acquainted with principles of fiqh - especially al-ʿibādāt.⁽¹⁾
- e) To be a practising religious man of good behaviour, in order to set a good example for his students and to give the khalwa a good name.⁽²⁾
- f) To be free from any speech defects - and to have a clear voice.⁽³⁾
- g) To lead in prayer and to instruct his students how to do it.⁽⁴⁾
- h) To be able to manage his khalwa and to have such qualities as patience, maintaining discipline, establishing good relations with his employer, the khalīfa, and with his students and the public at large.⁽⁵⁾

Usually the khalwa faki does not hold a written certificate but would be nominated by his previous khalwa teacher.⁽⁶⁾

From all the above, it seems clear that, and with reference

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- 1. Some khalwas had special teachers for ʿilm (fiqh and other subjects); see Kadabās, Hamishkorayb, below.
 - 2. This was a universal prerequisite.
 - 3. This is important because khalwa education depends largely on verbal dictation (see Methods ..., below).
 - 4. At large khalwa centres the Friday prayer was led by the khalīfa or another imām (see Umm Dawwan Bān).
 - 5. The writer's observations.
 - 6. See "Methods of teaching and learning", below.

to the different periods (the Funj, the Turco-Egyptian, the Mahdiyya, the Condominium and the period of National rule) the qualifications of the khalwa teachers at present have declined to their lowest level. In view of the requirements of the age and the needs of the people, they seem to fall short of giving adequate preparation for the khalwa teacher to play a more effective role in his district.

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C. The training of khalwa teachers:

Before finally taking his job as an independent khalwa fakī, the 'graduate' student would be required by his former teacher to stay at his mother khalwa to gain further training in teaching and help in carrying out other duties for a period that varied from one khalwa to another - depending on the circumstances of both the new fakī and the khalwa.

Al-Majādhīb of al-Damer used to retain each of their graduates for a year in order to have more practical experience and to assist in teaching at the khalwa.⁽¹⁾

That practice seems to have continued throughout the ages. Today, at the khalwas of al-muhājirīn in Darfur, in Western Sudan, the very senior muhājirīn, who were about to graduate, would be delayed and retained by their fakīs to help them, as assistants, for a period that could extend to four years.⁽²⁾

At the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī, in Gezira, Central Sudan, a number of students who had already completed their khalwa study were, in 1981, working as assistants to the fakīs, presiding over halqas of the Qur'ān - such as al-Day 'Alī Ṣālim and Ṣāliḥ 'Alī

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1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.
 2. Information from al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar at the khalwa of Nāmī, Tawīla District, Dārūr, December, 1981.

both from Kordufan, Amīr (the blind) and al-Ṭayyib Ḥammad.⁽¹⁾

Although this traditional practice would give the prospective teachers more practical training experience and would have given them more administrative and other experiences from their attachment to their former teachers, yet it seems to have been equally, if not more, beneficial to the mother khalwa.⁽²⁾

Providing the starting fakī with a few students from his mother khalwa:

When the student finally completed his khalwa studies he would look forward to work as a khalwa fakī.

When he was chosen to open a new khalwa, or revive an old one, he would usually be provided by his old fakī with a handful of fuqarā' to act as a nucleus for the new khalwa.

There are many references to such a practice in al-Ṭabaqāt.⁽³⁾

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1. The writer's visit to the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī.
 2. Some of the old teachers at the khalwa could be relieved of their work for days by such assistance.
 3. See al-Ṭabaqāt, pp.253, 332, 207 and 154.

The trend seems to have been perpetuated across the ages.

In Darfur, in Western Sudan, when a muhājir had finally completed his studies and practical training at a muhājirīn khalwa, he would usually be provided with a number of junior muhājirīn (pupils) to accompany him to his home district, and with them, to start a muhājirīn khalwa near his village, or a village khalwa.⁽¹⁾

In the Gezira, too, the same practice has been followed. When the khalwa of Tayba Qurashī was revived in the late 1970s, the hired teacher, al-fakī Najm al-Dīn - a graduate of the khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī - was said to have been provided by his mother khalwa with a number of students from Western Sudan studying at the latter khalwa, and could thus, successfully, revive the khalwa educational role.⁽²⁾ In 1981 the khalwa of Tayba Qurashī was

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1. Information from al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar of al-muhājirīn khalwa at Nāmī, and from al-fakī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad Ḥarūn of Tawīla, December, 1981.
 2. Interview with al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Dūsūqī, khalīfa of the khalwa of Tayba in November, 1981.

embracing more than fifty students studying the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾

The practical advantages of sending a few students with the new fakī who was starting an independent new khalwa are obvious. The practice seems to have served as a moral support to and a practical recognition and approval by the ex-teacher of the new fakī. In addition, as alluded to above, with that core of pupils the new fakī would start his new khalwa and attract others to join it. Moreover, these same students would serve as assistants to the new fakī - helping him to carry out his instructional, administrative and social functions successfully, as was the practice at the established khalwas.⁽²⁾

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1. Interview with al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Dūsūqī, khalīfa of the khalwa of Ṭayba, in November 1981; the writer's visit to the khalwa.
 2. See Wad al-Fādnī, Umm Dawwan Bān and Hamishkorayb, for example.

D. Further Teacher's Training

Khalwa teachers - the fakīs - throughout the ages, seem to have experienced retraining after they had taken their jobs as independent teachers, managing their own institutions. The justification for such a practice has always been to enable those fakīs to promote their knowledge and experiences in order to live up to the standards and expectations of their age.

Al-Tabaqāt gives a number of references to that practice.

When al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Kimānī arrived from Egypt and finally settled at Berber (second half of the 10th/16th century)⁽¹⁾ he was said to have introduced the teaching of 'ilm al-farā'id.⁽²⁾ The following 'ulamā' and khalwa teachers were said to have come to his halqa and attended the course he was giving. They were:⁽³⁾

- al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī, who had studied under al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir,
- al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān Ḥamadū,
- al-Qādī Dushayn,
- al-faqīh Juwayda, and
- al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Misrī.

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.355.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

When al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (d.1094/1863) took over his job as a khalwa teacher, he was said to have complained to the acting khalīfa, al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Aghar, that he had not studied the science of tawhīd; hence al-faqīh 'Alī b. Barrī was said to have been summoned to instruct the Shaykh in tawhīd.⁽¹⁾ In addition, al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh was reported, also, to have received further instruction in Ahkām al-Qur'an from al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Aghbash, who was trading in horses in the region at the time.⁽²⁾

When al-faqīh Muḥammad b. Medanī Dushayn changed to teaching al-Risāla instead of Khalīl which had been recommended by his teacher - al-Qaddāl - he found that he needed further study of al-Risāla. Hence, he was said to have gone to al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (d.1094/1683) every week-end, in order to be instructed and to read "Layḥān al-Uṣbū'" (to read the following week's lessons) which he wanted to teach to his students.⁽³⁾

He benefited from his inservice training and his halqa of 'ilm grew in size to the extent that it embraced more than five hundred students.⁽⁴⁾

When al-faqīh 'Alī b. Diyāb al-Qurayshābī went to express

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.209.

2. Ibid., p.281.

3. Ibid., p.332.

4. Ibid.

his condolences to the family of his dead teacher, al-faqīh Salam al-Mājidī, he was requested by the family to take over his master's teaching post. He responded positively. But, when he actually started teaching he discovered that because he had not been teaching for a long time it was, in fact, difficult for him to satisfactorily carry out his job without receiving further training.⁽¹⁾ Hence, he used to go to al-faqīh Shummū b. 'Adlān, every week-end, at Arbajī to study the lessons of the next week and continued to do so till he consolidated his academic standard.⁽²⁾

The trend seems to have continued. The khalwa of al-Sūfī al-Azraq at al-Gadaref, in Eastern Sudan, was said to have been used as a retraining centre by its ex-students, who later became khalwa fakīs in the region.⁽³⁾

The teachers used to assemble on week-ends at the khalwa to discuss the academic problems each had faced during the week. Hence, making use of the khalwa library and through their deliberations, they would arrive at the relevant solutions to the issues raised by their respective students which would be carried back to them.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p. 287.

2. Ibid.

3. Information supplied to the writer by the present khalīfa of the khalwa, Ustādh 'Uthmān 'Abd al-Rahmān, al-Sūfī, 29th November, 1981.

4. Ibid.

On the other hand when, under the Condominium rule, many of the traditional khalwas were transformed into khalwa nizamiyya, the first task the Government did in this respect was to expose the selected traditional khalwa fakīs to a three month retraining course on the methods of teaching arithmetic, Arabic, fiqh and tajwīd, and to use the school teaching aids - the blackboard, chalk and the pupils' slates.⁽¹⁾

Under National rule, the agency of Ihyā' Nār al-Qur'ān succeeded, by 1967, in establishing several training centres for the retraining of reciters of the Qur'ān, at the hands of 'ulamā' from Egypt. As a result about 300 reciters and khalwa teachers were said to have received training or retraining in tajwīd⁽²⁾ and recitation of the Qur'ān.

Moreover, the envisaged Government's policy was to prepare reciters of the Qur'ān and experts in the Qur'ānic readings in sufficient numbers in order to revive the country's religious and cultural heritage.⁽³⁾

However, in actual fact, khalwa fakīs have continued perpetuating their traditional system of education and training.

1. MacMichael, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, p.259.

Badrī, Hayātī, vol.II, p.134.

2. Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.26.

3. Al-Mahrajān, p.28.

CHAPTER TWO

KHALWA STUDENTS

A. Titles

A khalwa learner in the Sudan used to have different titles, such as:

a) A huwār⁽¹⁾ (pl. hayrān)

This term is now one of the common titles used, especially at the Ṣūfī active khalwas, to denote both the learners and the followers of the Ṣūfī Shaykh.⁽²⁾

The author of al-Tabaqāt confirms the old usage of these terms.⁽³⁾

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1. "The word is Arabic for a young camel, the metaphysical message denoting that a pupil follows his master as the young camel follows its mother" (al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59). Shuqayr, vol.I, p.140.
 2. This has been a common usage for the term, and was confirmed by most of the khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Abū Qūrūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Ṭayba, etc. (The writer's visits to these khalwas, November, 1981). See also the Teacher's Categories and Titles, above.
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.81, 117, 218, 224, 304.

b) A faqīr (pl. fuqarā)

This term denotes a Sūfī; ⁽¹⁾ one who is poor in the sight of God ⁽²⁾; it applies to both learner and teacher of the khalwa. ⁽³⁾

The following examples from al-Tabaqāt will illustrate the usage:

When al-faqīh 'Alī al-Qurayshābī travelled to pay tributes on the death of his ex-teacher, al-faqīh Salam al-Māydī, his followers requested him to take the place of his ex-teacher and to teach "al-fuqarā" until his son Muḥammad completed his study and came back for his masjid and "fuqarā". ⁽⁴⁾

At the khalwa of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Qaddāl it was reported that when "al-fuqarā" rose up from their council and shook off dust from their prayer skin-mats, a cool wind would seem to blow". ⁽⁵⁾

c) A tilmīdh (pl. talāmīdh or talāmīdha)

This term denotes a pupil or a learner and has been more common with the learners of the Qur'ān than 'ilm, but was also used for both categories.

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.14.

2. MacMichael, vol.II, p.275; Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.140.

3. See Khalwa Teachers' Categories and Titles, above.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.287; Shuqayr, vol.II, p.146.

5. Ibid., p.81.

Al-Shaykh al-Qaddāl was told that al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn had commented that "talāmīdhatī a'lam min talāmīdhat walad al-Farādī ..."⁽¹⁾ "my pupils are more knowledgeable than the pupils of the son of al-Farādī..."

d) Sibyān (sing. Sabī) - a youth.

In the biography of al-Masallam al-Ṣaghīr it was reported that when he visited al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī at his khalwa at Abū Ḥarāz - posing himself as an ignorant man from al-bādiya (the desert) he was first admitted to "the khalwa of mu'allim al-sibyān"⁽²⁾ (the khalwa of the teacher of the youth).

e) tālib (pl. talaba or tullāb)

The term stands for a student and students; it has been used more to denote the learner(s) of 'ilm than the learner(s) of the Qur'ān.⁽³⁾

f) mujāwir (pl. mujāwirīn)

These two terms stand for neighbouring, i.e., living near to the mosque - a reference to the learner(s) who would live close to the mosque of study.

In Dār-Ḥūr region, in Western Sudan, according to Shuqayr,

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.81.

2. Ibid., p.84.

3. Ibid., p.81.

the common term for a learner was a mujāwir, (pl. mujāwirīn).⁽¹⁾

g) muhājir (pl. muhājirīn)

These two words stand for migrant(s) - denoting learners, especially in Dār-Fūr region who migrate internally or externally, for study, and who have come to be known as al-muhājirīn.⁽²⁾

h) Titles of women learners:

The feminine form of the above terms is used for female students.

1. Shuqayr, vol.II, p.146.

2. See khalwas of al-muhājirīn, above.

B. Categories of khalwa students

From the surveys of the khalwa centres, above, it could be seen that there were three types of khalwa students or fuqarā'; the fuqarā' of the Qur'ān, the fuqarā' of 'ilm and the fuqarā' of al-tariq (the Sūfī Path).⁽¹⁾

The fuqarā' of the Qur'ān were the learners of the first stage of the khalwa of the Qur'ān⁽²⁾; and the fuqarā' of 'ilm were those studying 'ilm at the second stage of the khalwa⁽³⁾; and the fuqarā' of al-tariq were those - usually - advanced students, or adults, who had completed their study and then sought initiation in the Sūfī Path.

C. Khalwa Students Age

Since its emergence, in the 10th/16th century, as an institution of learning the khalwa in the Sudan seems to have been following a traditional practice of open admission to all desirous learners - that is, without restriction on age or even the physical abilities of the learner. Hence, a khalwa could embrace learners of all ages and stages under the same roof and

1. See reference below in the section.
2. See "Methods of teaching and learning".
3. Ibid.

among them would be the blind and the handicapped.⁽¹⁾

In practice, the mosque and the khalwa were - up to the 19th century - the only institutions of education in the Sudan⁽²⁾ and the khalwa was the more important.⁽³⁾ Further, for practical and religious reasons, the mosque was not always open for educational purposes to both children and adults, as was the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

Accordingly, it has been the tradition of the khalwa to set no restriction on age for the learners. The common practice, however, was that a child could join the khalwa any time between the ages of five to fifteen years, the earlier the better.⁽⁵⁾

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1. There were always references, even to blind khalwa teachers - such as al-faqīh 'Abd al-Mājid b. Ḥamad al-Aghbash who taught for more than fifty years (al-Tabaqāt, p.280); al-faqīh 'Abd al-Ṣādiq b. Ḥasīb (al-Tabaqāt, p.270). At present the tradition of admitting the blind and the handicapped to the khalwa continues; the writer found a number of such students at the khalwas of Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādnī.
 2. Al-Bāqir, "Religious Education",
 3. Bashīr, p.6.
 4. Unlike the mosque, the khalwa could be established anywhere and for the least number of learners, and could serve the function of the mosque as well (see al-Tabaqāt, p.13). According to al-Imām Mālik b. Anas, children are not allowed to study at the mosque (Ṣaḥnūn/al-Ahwani, p.315).
 5. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.

As an indication of the ages of khalwa students during the Funj period, Burckhardt stated that respectable families used to send their children at the ages of 12-14 to study at the khalwas of al-Majādhīb and at those of the Shāyqīyya.⁽¹⁾

The khalwa tradition of open admission for study to people of all ages has been perpetuated up to the present time.

In his tour to khalwas in the different regions of the Sudan,⁽²⁾ the writer found the boarding khalwas of Northern, Central and Western Sudan populated by learners the overwhelming majority of whom were of ages between eight and twenty years;⁽³⁾ and the village day khalwas were attended by learners of ages between five and eight years⁽⁴⁾ - a pre-school and pre-hijra (migration) age.⁽⁵⁾ At the khalwas of Hamishkorayb - the largest in the country - the age range of learners seems to extend from five to about over sixty years - i.e., almost the whole community.⁽⁶⁾

1. Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia.

2. The writer's visits to Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādī, Tayba, Wad al-Maqbūl, al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq, Hamishkorayb, Dār-Ḥūr (November - December, 1981).

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. The writer's visit to Hamishkorayb, December, 1981.

The survey of the Education Sector Review⁽¹⁾ gives a detailed picture of the khalwa students classified according to age groups.

The survey reveals that 26% of the khalwa male students and 39% of girl students were under seven years of age, and the percentage of both sexes under the age of seven was 28%.⁽²⁾

Those between ages seven and twelve (i.e. primary school age in the Sudan) constituted 42% of boys and 38% of girls and 42% of children of both sexes at the khalwa.⁽³⁾ Those khalwa hayrān between ages thirteen and fifteen represented 16% of boys and 7% of girls, and 15% of both sexes;⁽⁴⁾ those over sixteen (i.e. 16 - 60+) represented 16% of male students, 16% of female learners and 15% of both sexes.⁽⁵⁾

From the above it seems that the overwhelming majority of khalwa children in 1976 - 70% of all khalwa learners - were under age twelve years, and hence within the primary school age group.⁽⁶⁾

1. That survey was carried out in 1976.

2. Nūr, p.7.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

D. Female Students

The overwhelming majority of khalwa students has always been the male learners. Most of the women and girls seem to have been taught at home by the male members of their family.

However, there are a few references to individual women said to have been faqīhāt (sing. faqīha - woman teacher). For the Funj period, al-Tabaqāt cites Fātima bint Jābir - sister of the famous 'ulamā, the sons of Jābir⁽¹⁾, and mother of Ṣughayrūn "who was equal to her brothers in 'ilm and piety".⁽²⁾ Al-faqīra 'Āisha bint al-Qaddāl was conducting a kuttāb for teaching children at which al-Shaykh Khūjalī⁽³⁾, as a boy, was reported to have started his education under her.⁽⁴⁾

Further, according to al-Tabaqāt, the majority of the followers of al-Shaykh Ḥamad b. Maryūm⁽⁵⁾ were women - especially

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1. See the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir, above; (al-Tabaqāt, p.47).
 2. See the khalwa of Ṣughayrūn, above.
 3. A famous Ṣūfī Shaykh of the Shādhiliyya Order (d.1155), (al-Tabaqāt, p.2).
 4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.191.
 5. A famous faqīh who was known for his orthodox teachings, (born 1055/1646), al-Tabaqāt, p.174.

those from the tribe of Fazara who followed his orthodox teachings and became faqīrāt.⁽¹⁾

At the khalwas of al-Majādhīb there were said to have been individual faqīhāt from the family of al-Majādhīb such as al-Ḥājja Maryam Ḥājj 'Atuwwa who used to teach girls the Qur'ān and elementary fiqh.⁽²⁾

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule in the Sudan the khalwas continued as before - still predominantly populated by male students. However, there were also references to women conducting their khalwas - most probably for girls, or at least for children of both sexes - such as the two old ladies Amīna and 'Ā'isha of Sharkayla, in Kordufan, who requested aid for their khalwa from the Government, then.⁽³⁾

In Western Sudan there was said to have been a number of khalwas for girls in the province of Dar-Fur.⁽⁴⁾

However, the greatest rise in khalwa girls education seems

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.177.

2. Interview with al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.

3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.161; see "Financial aspect of khalwa education".

4. Interview with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Majīd Ismā'il, al-Fashir, December 1981.

to have taken place under National rule and in line with the trend of khalwa revival. It is not only in Western Sudan that there has been a steady rise in the number of khalwa girls, but even more so in Eastern Sudan. At the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāī for example⁽¹⁾, the number of female learners rose steadily from individual women taught at home by their male relatives to about five hundred khalwa female learners by 1970, to three thousand by 1974 and to about five thousand by 1981.⁽²⁾

In relation to the total number of khalwa learners the female students were reported to have constituted 13% by 1976.⁽³⁾

However, in terms of khalwa institutions, exclusive girl khalwas represented only 2%, but co-educational khalwas (for young children of both sexes) constituted 34%, while khalwas exclusively for male students represented 64%.⁽⁴⁾

As has been referred to above, the exclusive girl khalwas were run by women teachers (or shaykhāt - sing. shaykha) such as those of Eastern Sudan: the khalwa of Sit al-Ḥasan at Suākin, (Red Sea); the khalwa of Kāhīyya bint Abū Fāṭima at Suākin; the khalwa of Munīb Ibrāhīm at Suākin also; the khalwa

1. See the khalwas of Hamishkorayb for women, above.

2. Ibid.

3. Nūr, p.9.

4. Ibid., p.6.

of bint 'Umar - Rural Council of Western Red Sea region and the khalwa of Zaynab Ahmad at Tokar.⁽¹⁾ Further, the largest women's khalwa in the country at Hamishkorayb was run by more than sixty shaykhāt in 1981.⁽²⁾

Most of the co-educational khalwas, however, (which existed largely in Western Sudan) were run by male teachers (the fakīs).⁽³⁾

It should be added here that almost all of the female khalwas - exclusive or co-educational - are in the regions of Western and Eastern Sudan. Hence, there is hardly any khalwa for women in the riverain regions of Northern and Central Sudan, as there are for men. However, there have been established under National rule halqas for women for the recitation of the Qur'ān with a few nurseries attached to certain mosques in the capital.⁽⁴⁾

1. Nūr, p.13.

2. See the women khalwa at Hamishkorayb, December, 1981.

3. Information from the Department of Religious Affairs, al-Fashir, December, 1981.

4. Information from the Department of Religious Studies, Khartoum, October, 1981.

E. Students Hijra for Study

In the Sudan, the tradition of hijra for study seems to have been established by the pioneer teachers of the Funj era. As alluded to above, almost all of the famous teachers of the khalwa centres of that period had experienced hijra for studying The Qur'ān - and moreso for the study of 'ilm - when they were students. Such a hijra for study could be abroad or within the Sudan.

Of the pioneer students who emigrated for study, reference could be made to the following: Maḥmūd al-'Arakī⁽¹⁾; the Sons of Jābir⁽²⁾ - Ibrāhīm al-Bulād,⁽³⁾ 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir,⁽⁴⁾ Ismā'il b. Jābir⁽⁵⁾; their nephew Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn;⁽⁶⁾ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamadū;⁽⁷⁾ Aḥmad b. 'Isā of Kutrānj⁽⁸⁾, and others who were not engaged in teaching. It should be added that all of these students had their studies at al-Azhar in Egypt.⁽⁹⁾

Other students emigrated for study to al-Ḥijāz and became famous khalwa teachers during the Funj period, such as 'Abdallāh

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.345.

2. See the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir, above.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.41.

4. Ibid., p.252.

5. Ibid., p.47.

6. Ibid., p.236.

7. Ibid., p.257.

8. Irshad, p.16.

9. See "Teachers", above.

al-‘Arakī⁽¹⁾ and Muḥammad b. ‘Adlan al-Shayqī.⁽²⁾

However, the internal students' hijra for study was, understandably, greater. When each of the above-mentioned students came back from their study abroad, they established themselves as renowned khalwa teachers and, in turn, became centres of attraction for internal students' migration, as could be exemplified by the Sons of Jābir and their students.⁽³⁾

As indicated above, many of the outstanding khalwa teachers of the Funj period had migrated, as students, to the famous mosque-khalwa of the Sons of Jābir.⁽⁴⁾ Of these, reference could be made to: ‘Abdallāh al-‘Arakī,⁽⁵⁾ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mashyakh,⁽⁶⁾ ‘Abdallāh al-Aghbash,⁽⁷⁾ al-Masallamī b. Abū Wanīsa,⁽⁸⁾ ‘Isā al-Budayrī,⁽⁹⁾ Ya‘qūb b. Bān al-Naqā,⁽¹⁰⁾ Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn,⁽¹¹⁾ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamadū.⁽¹²⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.253.

2. Ibid., pp.359-60.

3. See their khalwa centres.

4. See their khalwa centre, above.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.253.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p.280.

8. Ibid., p.80.

9. Ibid., p.273.

10. Ibid., p.373.

11. Ibid., p.47.

12. Ibid., p.257.

Likewise, many of the students who studied at the khalwa centre of the Sons of Jābir seem to have, afterwards, established khalwa centres in their own home districts and, similarly attracted greater numbers of muhājirīn.

The khalwa centre of Ṣughayrūn at al-Qoz under his son al-Shaykh al-Zayn was said to have attracted more than a thousand learners⁽¹⁾ - most of whom would be muhājirīn. Students were reported to have flocked to the khalwa of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Qaddāl - a successor of the khalwa of Abū Wanīsa - from all over the region as well as from outside the country, to the extent that the number of students attending the khalwa exceeded two thousand students.⁽²⁾ Of these, about one thousand and seven hundred were said to have been Takārīr who seem to have immigrated from the region west of Dār-Fūr.⁽³⁾

The khalwa of al-Ghubush, under al-fakī 'Abd al-Mājid b. Ḥamad, was reported to have embraced about a thousand learners,⁽⁴⁾ the majority of them was said to have migrated to the khalwa from outside the region.⁽⁵⁾

Similarly, the khalwa of 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd at Nūrī

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.74.

2. Ibid., p.81.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.280.

5. Information from the khalwa khalīfa, November, 1981.

attracted a great number of muhājirīn. On one occasion his Sūfi master, al-Shaykh ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥalanqī, was said to have directed six hundred learners from Eastern Sudan to migrate to his khalwa in order to study under him the Qur’ān and ‘ilm.⁽¹⁾

Further, as has been quoted above, according to Burckhardt, Nubian children from Sukot and al-Mahas and other regions used to migrate to the khalwas of al-Majādhīb for study.⁽²⁾

The same trend of students hijra seems to have continued during the Turco-Egyptian rule - though owing to the financial constraints suffered by the khalwa Shaykhs and, as a result of the Government's policy the rate and size of students' hijra appears to have been much affected.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, the emigration of students to al-Azhar in Cairo seems to have increased as could be indicated by the establishment of riwāq al-Sinnārīyya and riwāq Dār-Fūr.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.282.

2. Burckhardt, L., Travels in Nubia, p.5/n; see also the khalwa centre of al-Majādhīb at al-Damer, above.

3. See "Condition of khalwas under the Turco-Egyptian period", above.

4. Student hostels at al-Azhar established by the Egyptian Government for students from the Funj Kingdom of Sennar and from Dar-Fur; see also ‘Abd al-Majid,

Internally students' migration to khalwa fakīs seems to have been widened by the considerable number of requests for financial and material aid submitted by these khalwa teachers to the Turco-Egyptian administration in order to help them maintain their away-from-home students.⁽¹⁾ Reference could be made, for example, to the khalwa of al-Ghubush under al-Shaykh al-Amīn Muḥammad Khūjalī and al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Khūjalī⁽²⁾, and the khalwa of al-faki Khalafallāh of al-Kitayyāb - al-Zaydāb district.⁽³⁾ The khalwa of al-Masīd also attracted a considerable number of muhājirīn - about 150 of them.⁽⁴⁾

Students were said to have migrated to the Sūfi khalwas such as that of Umm Dawwan Bān⁽⁵⁾ and Tayba Qurashī.⁽⁶⁾

Under the Mahdiyya period, as alluded to above, khalwa education was almost suspended and priority was given to jihād.⁽⁷⁾

Under the Condominium rule, owing to the Government's hostile attitude and unfavourable policies towards the traditional khalwa,

1. See "Financial Aspect of khalwa Education", below.

2. 'Abd al-Majid, vol.III, p.172.

3. Ibid., p.162.

4. See the khalwa of al-Masīd, above.

5. See the khalwas of Umm Dawwan Bān, above.

6. Information from al-Shaykh al-Dūsūqī, the khalwa khalīfa.

7. See the khalwa condition under the Mahdiyya, above.

the latter, as has been referred to above, was gradually displaced by the elementary and subgrade schools.⁽¹⁾ Hence, in effect, the students' hijra to the khalwa seems to have been drastically eroded and restricted to the few Ṣūfī khalwas that survived the Condominium regime - such as that of Umm Ḍawwan Bān and Kadabās, and the like, and to the traditional muhājirīn khalwas in Western Sudan - especially in Dār-Fūr.⁽²⁾

Under National rule, and in line with the general trend of khalwa revival as referred to above, a considerable number of the old Ṣūfī khalwa centres has been revived in Northern and Central Sudan. However, despite the change in time and conditions of life, requirements of the age and the needs of the people, the khalwa educational practices have been conducted on the traditional lines of the Funj era - though the main khalwa centres have witnessed substantial material renovations.⁽³⁾

Hence, as indicated above, the revived khalwa centres of Northern and Central Sudan seem to have been practically shunned - as educational institutions - by the people of their own

1. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

2. See Condition of khalwas under the "Condominium Rule", above; see also the muhājirīn khalwa, above.

3. The reference is made here to such khalwa centres as Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Ḍawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādni and Tayba Qurashī.

localities.⁽¹⁾ Parents in these regions have, for long, switched their children to the modern primary schools which have been the recognised gateway to higher education and, above all, to employment in the modern sector.⁽²⁾

Faced with this serious problem, the traditional khalīfas in charge of the revived khalwa centres of Northern and Central Sudan seem to have turned their attention to the traditional hijra of students as a guaranteed source of student population. Hence, they seem to have encouraged the hijra of students coming from distant regions, and provided them with all the necessary facilities of living, in addition to tuition, at their boarding khalwas.⁽³⁾

The students, on their part, seem to have found the conditions of life and the academic atmosphere at these khalwa centres much better than in their own regions.⁽⁴⁾

In effect, the main khalwa centres of Northern and Central

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1. See the student population of such khalwa centres as Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādni and Tayba Qurashī.
 2. See Conditions of khalwas under the Condominium period, above.
 3. See these khalwa centres for their living facilities.
 4. Information from the students from Western Sudan at the khalwas of Kadabās, Tayba and Wad al-Fādni, November 1981.

Sudan seem to depend almost entirely for their supply of learners on the students hijra and al-muhājirīn - especially from Western Sudan.⁽¹⁾ In evidence of this, the writer in his tour to these main khalwa centres has discovered the complete absence of learners from the populous villages, in which these khalwas are located, amongst the large student population of each khalwa - not even the sons of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs or the fakīs of these khalwas.⁽²⁾

At the khalwas of Eastern Sudan, such as those of Hamishkorayb, however, although the overwhelming majority of khalwa learners were from the same village communities, yet, there were also substantial numbers of muhājirīn coming from outside the region and even from beyond the borders. The bulk of migrant students to the khalwa was the tribes of the different parts of the region and the country. However, there were students from countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Yeman, Mali and Nigeria.⁽³⁾

As an evidence of the hijra of students to that khalwa, it was said that in 1981 the khalwa embraced about 8,000 learners of thirty different Languages⁽⁴⁾ Further, the women's khalwa of

1. Learners from Western (especially Dār-Fūr) constitute about 80% of the student population of these khalwas (the writer's visit).
2. See the khalwas of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba and Wad al-Fādni, for example.
3. Information from the deputy, the khalwas of Hamishkorayb.
4. Ibid.

Hamishkorayb was said to have included, in 1981, about five hundred women learners who migrated for study from outside the region.⁽¹⁾

In the region of Western Sudan - Kordufan and Dār-Fūr - and especially in the latter, hijra for 'ilm has been a deep-rooted traditional practice.

Religious teachers and 'ulama' were said to have been encouraged by the hospitality of the Fūr sultans to migrate to their kingdom and to institute their centres of learning.⁽²⁾ Students, too, used to travel for study to the different khalwa centres of the Funj kingdom and to al-Azhar in Egypt where a special riwāq was established for their accommodation.⁽³⁾

In time, in Western Sudan, and in particular in Dār-Fūr, the practice of hijra seems to have become so widespread that it has developed into a recognized institution of distinct characteristics. Almost all over the region, prior to the hijra, at the ages of 5-6 years children join their local village khalwas where they learn the rudiments of religious education -

1. Information from al-Shaykh Ṭāhir Abū Bakr who was in charge of the women's khalwas at Hamishkorayb.
2. See Condition of khalwas and "the Funj period", above.
3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.20.

the alphabet and the short sūras of the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾ At the ages of 9 - 12 they usually set out on hijra to another larger and distant boarding khalwa where a well-known fakī they had heard of was teaching.⁽²⁾ Such a khalwa has been known as khalwat al muhājirīn - khalwa of migrants.

The practice of hijra seems to have been developed into a deeply rooted custom amongst the Fūr people. The main reasons behind this phenomenon have been held to be the following.

There seems to have developed a conviction amongst the people of Dārfūr that it is the duty of every individual - and in particular the males - to learn the Qur'ān by heart.⁽³⁾ But, on the other hand, it is equally believed that one cannot attain this objective while studying at his home khalwa - hence the necessity of hijra.⁽⁴⁾

This belief seems to have been based on and consolidated by the widely held argument that khalwa learners would prefer to study away from home so as to avoid the home duties - such as

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1. Such as the khalwas of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Isā at al-Fāshir and the khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Yahyā at al-Ni'ma village, see above.
 2. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.118.
 3. Interviews with al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Majīd Ismā'īl Abū Bakr Najm al-Dīn, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Harūn, and al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar (the writer's visit to Dār-Fūr, December, 1981).
 4. Ibid.

looking after cattle and sheep, assisting parents in their cultivation, and so on. In this way, it was generally believed, a learner could devote all his efforts and time to his study. In addition, the muhājirīn's khalwa was usually superior in its academic standard to the small village khalwa. Consequently, the hijra for learning has become a deeply-rooted tradition.

As an evidence of this widespread and deeply rooted practice of hijra, the writer has found out that almost all of the khalwa teachers interviewed in the region have experienced hijra, and has been told that almost every khalwa teacher in the region must have studied at a distant muhājirīn's khalwa.⁽¹⁾ Today, despite the widespread khalwas in almost every village, learners continue to join the roving armies of muhājirīn. Subsequently, the student population of each muhājirīn camp was composed almost entirely of learners coming from different distant places.⁽¹⁾

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1. For example al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar of the muhājirīn's khalwa of Nāmī (see below); al-fakī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Harūn of the khalwa of Ṭawīla, previously was the Shaykh of al-muhājirīn's khalwa at the village of Ni'ma. Although his father was the khalwa fakī, he ran away to join a muhājirīn's khalwa. In turn, while he was managing his muhājirīn's khalwa his own son joined another one. (Interviews with the above mentioned fakīs at Nāmī and Ṭawīla, December, 1981).
 2. Information from al-fakī 'Abd Ḥamīd Harūn and al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar.

It seems interesting to mention that in the past young girls, too, were said to have gone on hijra and many of the old women of the region of Turra and Dāya were reported to have learnt the Qur'ān at the muhājirīn's camp for women.⁽¹⁾

Today, however, the practice of hijra has been restricted to males only, while girls still study at their village khalwas.⁽²⁾

It is also worth mentioning that the "muhājirīn's" movement which was said to have been widely spread amongst all the tribes of Dārfūr, in the past, seems now to have been restricted to and perpetuated by the Fur tribe.⁽³⁾

Today tangible evidence for the widespread practice of hijra for learning amongst the people of Western Sudan, in general, seems to be manifested also in the existence of large numbers of learners - constituting the bulk of students population - in each of the main khalwa centres of Northern and Central Sudan today.⁽⁴⁾

However, the muhājirīn's movement in Darfur seems to have

1. BSS, p.138.

2. The writer's observations at al-muhājirīn's camp of Nāmī; information from al-faki 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Harūn.

3. BSS, p.138.

4. The reference is made here to the khalwas of Kadabas, Abū Qurūn, UmmDawwan Bān, Tayba Qurashī, for example.

had a different concept from what has been known and experienced throughout the ages in the other parts of the Sudan.

The muhājirīn's movement, as a traditional practice that has been handed down from generation to generation seems to be manifested today, in Dār-fūr, in the form of separate students khalwa camps established in the neighbourhood of the main villages.⁽¹⁾ Each camp is composed of tens of low qatātī (sing. quttīyyah) (hut(s)) built by the students themselves around the fakī's residence and his khalwa of study.⁽²⁾

Although hijra for study has been a widely practised Islamic tradition, as had been alluded to above, and has been followed in the Sudan since the emergence of the Funj state, yet in Dār-Fūr province, the concept and the established Muslim practices of this tradition seem to have been greatly distorted.

Here, in contrast to the established practices of the khalwas in other parts of the country,⁽³⁾ and in contrast to the practice of khalwas under the Fūr sultāns it seems,⁽⁴⁾ the khalwa learners

1. BSS, p.136.

2. For further information on a muhājirīn camp, see the muhājirīn khalwa of Nāmi, Tawīla District, Dar-Fur, above.

3. See "Financial Aspect of Khalwa Education", below.

4. See contribution of the Fur Sultans "Financial Aspect...", below.

have been denied the traditional maintenance (exemplified mainly in the provision of food) which the khalwa Shaykhs used to provide to their students with (from the hakūra and donations they used to receive).⁽¹⁾

Hence, full of the conviction that the hijra as embodied in the muhājirīn khalwa was the effective and established means for the acquisition of the Islamic learnings, the learners in Dār-Fūr came to depend on themselves in securing their living.⁽²⁾

However, in order to secure food they seem to have fallen into bad practices - morally and socially.

Unfortunately, such malpractices seem to have been a characteristic of the muhājirīn khalwas as has been illustrated by the muhājirīn khalwa of Nāmī.

The trend seems to have caused the muhājirīn movement to give rise to another manifestation, which has been the sight of groups of young children (the muhājirīn) moving from village to village, on their weekly four-days tour, carrying their lawhs and chanting at the door of every house, asking for karāma (charity) for their living.⁽³⁾

1. See the "Financial aspect of education" for the Funj period below.

- Ibid., see the "Contribution of the Sultāns of Dār-Fūr".

2. See the muhājirīn khalwa of Nāmī, above; Trimingham, op. cit., p. 118; BSS, pp. 141-2.

It is this muhājirīn's way of living and the social and educational implications that it involves that seems to have made the muhājirīn's movement the focus of attention.

Since Independence, Dār-Fūr, in contrast to the Condominium period, has been widely open to outside contacts with the rest of the country. The Government's concern with the promotion of its social and religious affairs has been on the increase. With the creation of a provincial department for religious affairs and a khalwa inspectorate at al-Fāshir, and the establishment of local governments in the region, traditional muhājirīn's khalwa practices seem to have been increasingly exposed to scrutiny, and even to justified severe criticism as has been alluded to.⁽¹⁾

Of the main muhājirīn khalwa centres that flourished in Dār-Fūr region, reference could be made to the following: Kalas, Marandu, Hijayr, Bayla, Makajjar, Sandu, Taraj, Shanqa, Jabal Kūnū, Waddayya - all in Western Dar-Fur.⁽²⁾ Many other muhājirīn's khalwa camps are spread all over the region, and⁽³⁾ they seem to share almost the same characteristics.

1. See the khalwa of al-muhājirīn at Nāmī, above.

2. BSS, p.141.

The bulk of al-muhājirīn khalwas seem to have been concentrated in Western Dar-Fur.

3. A typical muhājirīn's khalwa, which was visited by the writer in November 1981, was that of Nāmī, Tawīla District, Northern Dār-fūr.

F. Khalwa Students' Accommodation

There seems to have been two main types of student accommodation:

- (a) living with families, and
- (b) living at special khalwas of accommodation.

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- (a) Living at home or with families:

This type of living generally included two categories of khalwa learners:

- i) The village khalwa hayrān:

As could be expected, almost all village khalwa learners, whether young or old, would live with their parents and families and attend the daily programmes of the khalwa.⁽¹⁾

- ii) The away from home learners:

At first khalwas do not seem to have had special accommodation facilities. Hence, out-of-village children would live with relatives at the village in which the khalwa was located, or with families who would maintain such learners, as an act of charity pleasing to God, and as a symbol of support to the khalwa

1. This depended on the availability of a khalwa in the village.

Shaykh in his mission.⁽¹⁾

The following examples are cited to illustrate how some of the away-from-home khalwa learners used to live.

According to al-Tabaqāt, Faṭīma bint Jābir, the learned and pious sister of the four sons of Jābir, used to accommodate and maintain twenty-four of the students of her brother - al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir, at Taranj - at her expense.⁽²⁾

At Kutranj, khalwa students (away-from-home), used to be distributed over the families - old students would take their meals with the heads of the families and sleep in special khalwas around the masjid, while the young learners would be living with the families who would treat them like their own children.⁽³⁾

At the khalwa of al-Ghubush, too, the away-from-home learners used to be distributed over the families who would be in charge of their upkeep.⁽⁴⁾ Those few who were not attached to families, however, used to live at the khalwa but were said to have been supplied with food from the people.⁽⁵⁾

1. See the examples, below.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.226.

3. Interview with ustādh Muṣṭafā ‘Abdallāh Nūr, descendant of the family of al-Shaykh ‘Īsā al-Anṣārī, founder of Kutranj masjid, Kutranj, November, 1981.

4. Information from al-Khalīfa ‘Abd al-Mājid, November, 1981.

5. Ibid.

(b) The khalwas of accommodation

When the number of away-from-home learners increased and it became difficult for the village families to provide accommodation and maintenance for these migrant learners, a need seems to have risen to erect special rooms around the khalwas of study, for such learners to live in - as student hostels.

These student hostels around the khalwas of study came to be known as the khalwas of accommodation of the learners - al-fuqarā' - or the khalwas of al-fuqarā'.⁽¹⁾

1. This seems to have been an established Muslim tradition:

a) In reference to the city of Wāsit, in Iraq, which he visited, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa states that the city had a magnificent college for the memorization and recitation of the Qur'ān; and in order to enable the out-of-town learners to study at the college, three hundred khalwas were established for the lodging of strangers (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, vol.II, p.272).

b) In Damascus, at Dār al-Qur'ān, established by al-Ṣābūnī (A.H.863) there was said to have been provision for the lodging of the imām and ten khalwas for the lodging of his students, the fuqarā' (al-Nu'aymī, 'Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad, al-Dāris fī Ta'rikh al-Madāris, Damascus, 1976, pp.13-15).

c) Sultan Gaytibāi was said to have built in 1477/881 near Bāb al-Salām in Mecca seventy-two khalwas for the lodging of teachers and their students ('Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.102).

In terms of the source of maintenance, however, these khalwas of accommodation could be classified into two categories, as shown in (i) and (ii).

- (i) Khalwas of accommodation provided and maintained by khalwa Shaykhs and followers:

Traditionally, khalwas of students' accommodation were usually maintained by the khalwa Ṣūfī Shaykhs, who were helped in this respect by generous donations from followers, rulers and through personal revenues from Ṣūfī and saint-cult rituals.⁽¹⁾

Al-Tabaqāt contains many references to this phenomenon of student accommodation and maintenance at the expense of the khalwa teacher or Ṣūfī Shaykh.

Al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. Ḥusūna was reported to have been maintaining between eleven to thirteen khalwas of al-fuqarā; as to their food, he was said to have ordered that for each khalwa two goats were to be slaughtered, daily.⁽²⁾

Al-fakī Qaqūm b. 'Alī b. Barri was reported to have had five hundred learners at his khalwa living at his expense.⁽³⁾

1. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.139.

3. Ibid., p.315.

The khalwa of al-Shaykh al-Zayn Ṣughayrūn had about one thousand learners - most of whom were migrant learners who seem to have been living at his expense.⁽¹⁾

The khalwa of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Qaddāl embraced about two thousand learners, who were mainly migrant students, living at his expense at their khalwas of accommodation.⁽²⁾

Such a tradition of providing accommodation and maintenance to khalwa students by the khalwa authorities seems to have continued during the Turco-Egyptian rule, despite the financial constraints to which the khalwa Shaykhs were exposed.⁽³⁾ Al-fakī Khalafallāh of al-Kitayyāb, Zaidab district, was reported to have been maintaining one hundred and seventy two students - most of whom were away-from-home learners.⁽⁴⁾

Similarly, each of the khalwa Shaykhs Badawī Abū Ṣafiyya, al-Sayyid al-Makkī b. Ismā'īl al-Walī (both from Kordufan) and al-Shaykh Muḥammad Tawm of Sennar district, was maintaining more than one hundred students.⁽⁵⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.74.

2. Ibid., p.218.

3. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

4. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.162.

5. Ibid., vol.III, p.165; see "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

Many other Sūfī Shaykhs seem to have been following that tradition even during the Condominium rule.⁽¹⁾

Today almost all of the old khalwa centres which have been revived under National rule have special khalwas of students where hundreds, and indeed thousands, of fuqarā' are accommodated and maintained - mainly at the expense of the khalwa Sūfī Shaykhs. The reference is made here to such khalwas as Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādī, Tayba Qurashī, Wad al-Maqbūl and Hamishkorayb, as alluded to above.⁽²⁾

(ii) Khalwas of accommodation maintained by the students themselves:

In Western Sudan, and Dār-Fūr province in particular, unlike the traditional practice in other parts of the country, alluded to above, or within the same region as under the Fur Sultans when khalwa students had been accommodated and maintained by the fakī who used to live on the revenue of the hakūra granted to him by the Sultans, there emerged a new type of students' accommodation - the muhājirīn khalwa camps.⁽³⁾ Here, as referred to above, young learners leave their homes and migrate to distant

1. Information from ustādh 'Alī, Kadabās, and al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, Umm Dawwan Bān, November, 1981.

2. See these khalwa centres for students' accommodation, above.

3. See the khalwa of al-muhājirīn, at Nāmī, Tawīla district, Dar-Fur.

khalwa Shaykhs, and there each group coming from the same locality or tribe would join hands and build their own khalwas of accommodation and maintain themselves through direct charity from the villagers around them.⁽¹⁾

It seems interesting to note that besides serving as a student hostel for the large numbers of its migrant learners, as referred to above, the traditional Ṣūfī khalwa used to provide accommodation and food for the masses of followers of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs who would come for visitations, seeking the baraka of their Shaykhs.⁽²⁾

In addition, before the spread of the modern means of transport - and especially during the Funj period - the khalwa centres were constantly used as stopping places for the caravan routes and wayfarers.⁽³⁾ Here, special guest khalwas were established to provide accommodation for the travellers, food, water and, above all, protection from the bandits, were provided by the Ṣūfī Shaykhs.⁽⁴⁾

Most of the expenses of such a social function were met through the generous donations which most of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs

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1. See the khalwa of al-muhājirīn at Nāmī, Tawīla district, Dānḡūr.
 2. See Pt.I, ch.1 for "karamāt and visitations".
 3. See below, the khalwas of guests.
 4. The reference is specially made to the khalwas of al-Majādhīb of al-Damer, above.

would receive,⁽¹⁾ or met from the khalwa Shaykh's own expenses - in the case of those who refrained from accepting such alms and nudhūr.⁽²⁾

Al-Tabaqāt makes many references to this social function of the khalwas - being used by travellers and followers as a guest house, at the expense of the Ṣūfī khalwa Shaykhs.⁽³⁾

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1. Most of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs accepted such pious gifts, as was illustrated in "Financing of khalwa education", below.
 2. The reference is made here to al-Majādhīb of al-Dāmer and their descendants of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq.
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.51,n2, 158, 343, 121, 260, 261.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE KHALWA

A. Background to teaching in the khalwa

Traditional Muslim educational practices were transferred and established in the Sudan by the pioneer teachers of the early Funj era and were perpetuated, afterwards, by their students.

In line with the personal responsibility of Muslims in respect to learning and teaching, as alluded to earlier, they were said to have developed a system of individual instruction that was based, essentially, on dictation and memorization, especially in respect to the teaching of the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾

The origin of such an established practice, however, could be traced back to the way the Prophet himself received and transmitted the revelation to his Companions. Muslims believe that the Qur'ān in its entirety was dictated orally in piece-meal to the Prophet through the angel Gabriel.⁽²⁾ The Prophet, in turn, memorized it and dictated it to his companions in the exact text and readings, as it was revealed to him.⁽³⁾

The subsequent generations of Muslims, following the example of the Prophet, and urged and encouraged by the Qur'ān and hadīth⁽⁴⁾ embarked on learning and teaching the Qur'ān through

1. 'Abd al-Dā'im, Abdallāh, al-Tarbiya 'Abr al-Qurūn, p.185.

2. 'Alī, 'Abdallāh Yūsuf, Translation and Commentary on the Glorious Kur'an, p.15.

3. Ibid., pp.14-20.

4. See the Introduction, p.5, n.1, above.

the same method.

Other factors, however, were reported to have made it imperative to rely more and more on individual instruction and more so on the dictation-memorization. Furthermore, and as a result of developments in the written Arabic language, it was realised that there was a discrepancy, in some respects, between the script of the 'Uthmānic copy of the Qur'ān - as regards some words such as 'ṣalāt', 'zakāt', 'kitāb', 'Mubārak' and the rules of the standard written language.⁽¹⁾

Hence, in order, on the one hand, to preserve the original written form of the Qur'ān - the script of the 'Uthmānic copy - and, on the other, to correct the discrepancy in reading referred to above, dots and grammatical signs were added to the basic fifteen letters - thus making them twenty eight.⁽²⁾

However, in view of the general level of illiteracy at the time and the scarcity of paper, Muslims had to rely on memorization.⁽³⁾ They realised that the practical and most effective safeguards against faulty reading of the text of the Qur'ān was the constant presence of sufficient number of reciters

1. Y. al-Khalīfa, al-Rasm al-Qur'ānī, p.3.

2. Ibid., p.1; the fifteen original Arabic letters were:

أ ب ح د ر س ص ط ع و ك ل م ه و

see 'Alī, 'Abdallāh Yūsuf, op. cit., p.19.

3. Ibid., p.18.

who had learnt the Qur'ān by heart according to the exact text and the standard reading(s). Hence, the necessity of the continuity of a chain of reciters from the time of the Prophet to the present date, to act as guides to learners of the Qur'ān wherever there are Muslims.⁽¹⁾

Then, as a result of the expansion of Islam to territories of non-Arabic speaking people there arose the problem of tendencies towards widening differences in reading the text of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾ In order to put an end to such differences and to unite the Muslim around one authenticated copy of the Qur'ān, the third caliph, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, ordered that one standard form be copied out from the original text compiled earlier by the first caliph, Abū Bakr, be sent to the provinces and all other existing copies be prohibited and burnt.⁽³⁾

To facilitate the dissemination of the 'Uthmānic copy reciters were reported to have been sent with these copies to instruct the Muslims how to correctly read the text of the Qur'ān.⁽⁴⁾ The message was carried over by their students. Such a practice seems to have greatly emphasized the dictation-memorization method started earlier.

Another important factor which seems also to have consolidated this approach arose from the fact that the text of the Qur'ān

1. 'Alī, ^cAbdallāh Yūsuf, op. cit., p.19.

2. Ibid., p.18.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.19.

was written down by the amanuensis of the Prophet in the Arabic script of the day which had neither dots nor vowel points.⁽¹⁾

Non-Arabic speaking Muslims found it difficult to adhere to the correct readings of the Qur'ān and there was great concern over faulty readings. This problem made it highly imperative that the correct text and reading(s) be dictated and memorized all over the lands of Islam.

Today, even with some degree of literacy among the Muslims it is extremely difficult for a Muslim, on his own, to learn or even to read the Qur'ān correctly without the guidance of a reciter or an experienced Qur'ān teacher. Hence, the necessity of learning the Qur'ān by heart, as dictated by a teacher acquainted with the correct reading(s) of the Qur'ān.

As a result of all this the transmission of the Qur'ān through individual instruction, dictation and memorization, has been perpetuated throughout the generations as the established method of learning and teaching the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

Not only that, but this method has been followed in teaching and learning other religious subjects such as ḥadīth, tafsīr, fiqh and so on.

1. 'Alī, Abdallāh Yūsuf, op. cit., p.18.

2. See below.

Henceforth, in order to learn the Qur'ān and/or study a book or any branch of 'ilm, the learner - and in particular the prospective teacher - in the Sudan (as in other parts of the Muslim world) in the absence of professional teachers' training had to get in touch with a well experienced fakī and to attach himself to him for study and training.

This seems to have developed into a universal practice during the Funj era, and could be attested by the numerous references to the attachment of almost every scholar noted in al-Tabaqāt to a teacher of his choice, to learn the Qur'ān and, in particular, to study a subject of 'ilm or a book in which the student was interested and the teacher versed, and to follow a Shaykh in the Ṣūfī path.⁽¹⁾

In all this the role of the teacher seems to have been crucial. This was regarded more so, it seems, because of the high importance attached to authentic transmission in respect to such matters as the correct readings of the Qur'ān and its interpretation and the narration of hadīth.

This could be evidenced by the fact that, in line with the practice of Muslim scholars elsewhere, almost every Sudanese scholar noted in al-Tabaqāt was reported to have learnt the Qur'ān under a fakī; then studied 'ilm at the hands of another

1. See "the qualifications of teachers during the Funj era," above.

one (each branch under a fakī), and was initiated in the Sūfī Path by a different Shaykh. In all such cases, it was the individual teacher - and not the institution - from whom the student acquired his knowledge and experiences.

The justification for the perpetuation of such a system in the Sudan, in addition to the inherited Islamic experience mentioned above, seems to reside in the fact that the khalwa teacher of the Funj era was, in most cases, the only source of knowledge in a region engulfed by ignorance of the Sharī'a, illiteracy and lacking in source material - such as text and library books. Hence, the reliance on the efforts of the one teacher, not only in teaching but also in shouldering other important religious and social functions.

On the other hand, both the khalwa teacher and his institution seem to have remained, throughout the ages, extremely conservative. Hence the preservation and the perpetuation of almost the same traditions and practices, with all their merits and shortcomings, across the generations. This seems to have been especially true of the Funj, the Turco Egyptian and the Mahdiyya periods, as has been explained earlier.

Remarking on this phenomenon, and in reference to the khalwa

educational practices under the Turco-Egyptian rule, 'Abd al-Majīd stated that the same pattern of mosque/khalwa practices, methods and techniques that were followed under the Funj were, in turn, perpetuated under the Turco-Egyptian period in the Sudan.⁽¹⁾

The same view was shared by Kāmil al-Bāqir who also holds that under the Turco-Egyptian regime (1821-1885) the learning system - in the Sudan - retained its traditional form in aims, policy and means. The areas of teachers, syllabuses and methods of instruction remained unchanged from what they had been.⁽²⁾

Under the Mahdiyya rule, as was alluded to before, the top priority was given to the question of jihād.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, the revolution was extended to the content of education but not to the methods and practices. At the instructions of al-Mahdī, Sūfī teachings and practices were banned; sterile and divisive books and commentaries of fiqh were also prohibited and burnt, and even the four orthodox Sunnī madhhabs were suspended; and the overriding message was the call for the return to Orthodox Islam.⁽⁴⁾ However, as far as the methods and techniques of teaching and learning were concerned, no change seems to have been introduced.⁽⁵⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, pp.18-19.

2. Al-Bāqir, "Religious Education", p.81.

3. See Conditions of khalwas under the Mahdiyya , above.

4. See the teachings of al-Mahdī, above.

5. 'Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., pp.18-19.

Under the Condominium rule, though the khalwa position and roles were drastically undermined by the establishment of the rival institution - the modern school - and by the temporary conversion of many khalwas to khalwa nizāmiyya ⁽¹⁾, yet the khalwa's traditional methods of teaching and learning were said to have persisted. Not only that, but there were complaints that they were even transferred into the modern school.⁽²⁾

However, it was those traditional Sūfī khalwas that survived the Condominium regime - such as those of Kadabās,⁽³⁾ and Umm Dawwan Bān⁽⁴⁾ - which seem to have preserved the khalwa traditions and practices.

Under national rule (since 1956) and in line with the Government's supportive policy towards khalwas' revival, hundreds of traditional khalwas have emerged, retaining and perpetuating almost the same traditional methods of instruction and practices - including teachers' preparation - with all their merits and weaknesses.

In evidence of the above, almost all of the khalwa teachers visited by the writer, confirmed that they were following almost the same methods and techniques of teaching and learning that

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1. The khalwa nizāmiyya under the Condominium period, above.
 2. See Conditions of khalwas under "the Condominium period."
 3. See the khalwa of Kadabās, above.
 4. See the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, above.

had been handed down by their ancestors.⁽¹⁾

No doubt this seems to be a clear illustration of the state of stagnation which the khalwa has been undergoing for centuries.

However, by adopting the traditional method of individual instruction by khalwa teachers in teaching the Qur'ān, as alluded to above, it became feasible for khalwas to follow a system of open admission throughout the year.⁽²⁾ Not only that, but it became also feasible for a learner to reconcile his study and his work - that is, he could break his study for any length of time and rejoin the khalwa again to resume his study from where he had stopped.⁽³⁾

As a result of the above the typical khalwa would include learners of different academic standards - ranging from beginners

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1. The reference is made here in particular to the main khalwa centres such as those of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān Wad al-Fādnī, Tayba Qurashī, Wad al-Maqbūl, Hamishkorayb, which are all almost following identical methods of teaching and learning - especially teaching and learning reading and writing Arabic and the Qur'ān.
 2. This has been the universal system followed by khalwas all over the country and for generations. (Information obtained from different khalwa fakīs.)
 3. Ibid.; this seems to have been, in effect, a recurrent type of education.

to advanced levels.⁽¹⁾

Moreover, in line with the direction of the Prophet's Hadīth "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave",⁽²⁾ and the religious obligation to teachers to provide education to their fellow Muslims,⁽³⁾ the khalwa teachers have been receiving learners of different ages - from about the age of five to over seventy.⁽⁴⁾

Furthermore, because of their great piety and hospitality - as exemplified in the provision of free education and upkeep (accommodation, food and clothes) the khalwa teachers have for long been attracting learners from all parts of the country.⁽⁵⁾

In effect, the typical traditional khalwa usually included learners of different ages, academic standards and environmental backgrounds - all to be taught by the one khalwa teacher and under the same roof of the one-room school, the khalwa.⁽⁶⁾

One would imagine that this would have been too difficult a

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1. The writer's observations from his visits to the different khalwas.
 2. Ḥājji Khalīfa, Kashf al-Zunūn, vol.I, p.32.
 3. See attitude of Islam towards education, above.
 4. The writer's observations at the main khalwa centres - especially at Hamishkorayb.
 5. See "Khalwa Students", above for accommodation, hijra.
 6. The writer's observations from his visits to the khalwas.

task to be managed by a single teacher. However, in practice the traditional khalwa teacher has always carried out his teaching function (in addition to other religious and social functions) effectively within the context of what was required of him.

In order to conduct their teaching role efficiently the khalwa teachers have taken recourse in a monitorial system of instruction. The heterogeneous khalwa student population has been divided and subdivided - depending on the number of learners at the khalwa - into a number of ḥalqas taking into consideration such factors as the student's academic level, age and region.⁽¹⁾ In other words, each ḥalqa would embrace a group of learners of approximately similar academic standards such as beginners, middle-level and advanced groups of learners. In such grouping other factors, such as age-group, and often locality or region, are to some extent also taken into account.⁽²⁾

The khalwa teacher - the Qur'ān fakī, in this respect - would usually be in charge of instructing the senior or the advanced ḥalqa of learners, while still responsible for overseeing the management of instruction of the junior ḥalqas.⁽³⁾

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1. This procedure was followed at all of the main boarding khalwas: Kadabās, Abu Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī.
 2. For example, when there were several students of similar standards but of different age groups, they would usually be broken in smaller groups or ḥalqas of young and old. (The writer's observations at Wad al-Fādnī).
 3. The writer's observations at the main khalwa centres.

To help him carry out his teaching function, the khalwa faki would normally appoint each of the more able students of the halqa of the advanced learners to preside over one of the middle level halqas and to instruct the learners of that halqa in the same way he had been taught.⁽¹⁾

In a similar way a selected number of hayrān of the middle-level halqas would be appointed to be in charge of teaching the short sūras of the Qur'ān to the junior halqas of beginners.⁽²⁾

Other members of the middle and senior halqas would be appointed to be in charge, each, of a newly admitted individual learner to the khalwa - mainly teaching him the Arabic alphabet.⁽³⁾

All the halqa shaykhs (junior instructors) would be under the constant direction and guidance of the chief khalwa faki, who would be keen to see that each junior or halqa shaykh was conducting his specified task, according to the best of his abilities, and all the time following his example (the faki's).⁽⁴⁾

1. This has been a universal practice at the big khalwas. The writer has observed this system followed at Kadabas, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān and Hamishkorayb.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Information from al-faki Ḥasb al-Rasūl at Umm Dawwan Bān. The writer's observations.

The function of junior shaykhs was not restricted to teaching but was also extended to other areas.⁽¹⁾

A striking feature and indeed an essential component of traditional khalwa education has been the upbringing of the hūwār in an atmosphere of religiousness and according to the khalwa moral behaviour. While learning the Qur'ān the learner would acquire basic knowledge about Islam. In particular he would receive instruction by the khalwa Shaykh, his assistants or by a murshid dīnī, on 'ibādāt - how to observe tahāra, to make wudū', to perform prayers (the five daily, Friday's, 'id's, funeral's and rain's prayers), to observe fasting and know the conditions of zakā and the rituals of hajj, and he would also practise the Ṣūfī rituals.⁽²⁾

Throughout his years of study the hūwār would be subjected to the pervasive spirituality of the khalwa as exemplified in the constant loud recitation of the Qur'ān, the ādhān for prayer, the group prayer, the Ṣūfī dhikr, the visitations of the masses and their anecdotes about the karamāt of the khalwa Shaykhs. All this seems to mould the personality of the khalwa learner - giving rise to distinct qualities such as religiousness, modesty, dependancy on charity, respect to elders, and above all unquestioned respect and loyalty to his Ṣūfī Shaykh, the spiritual father.⁽³⁾

Let us now see how the teaching and learning of the Qur'ān has been conducted.

1. See khalwa Administration, below.

2. The writer's observations from his visits to the different khalwas.

3. Ibid.

B. Teaching the Qur'ān

Although there has been no restriction on admission to the khalwa, children have always constituted the bulk of the student population.⁽¹⁾ In this respect, a child could join the khalwa any time between the ages of five and fifteen, but the earlier the better.⁽²⁾

Long before joining the khalwa, however, the elders of the family, and especially the parents, would have aroused the interest and encouraged the child to join the khalwa to avail himself of the baraka (blessings), and knowledge of the Shaykh or the fakī of the khalwa and to come out as a great 'ālim, as the fakī himself or one of their ancestors.

In practice, before officially being admitted to the khalwa, the child's interest would usually have been aroused, also, by his visits to the khalwa when accompanying his father to the mosque for prayer, or on visitation to the Shaykh or the khalwa fakī. Normally, on such occasions the fakī, who knew and was known to almost all the people of the village, would have expected and agreed with the father to admit his son to the khalwa when he was mature enough for khalwa education.⁽³⁾ Hence,

1. See "khalwa students", above.

2. Al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.

3. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq, al-Ṣūfī, Gadārf.

This applies to small villages, and depends on whether the fakī had grown up in the village or stayed long enough to know the people.

he would show a parental attitude towards the child and usually hand him dates as a symbol of baraka and an effective incentive to the child.⁽¹⁾

In addition, the child would have been attracted by the sight of the halqas of learners chanting the Qur'ān, each with his lawh in his hands. Among these he would normally have recognized many of the older children of his neighbourhood who would be delighted to see him join their khalwa.

On the day of admission, the father would take his son to the village khalwa faki, at sun-rise, usually on a Wednesday. The choice of Wednesday for admission of the new huwār seems to have been an old custom.

The justification for such a practice seems to lie in the fact that the khalwa working day was relatively lighter on Wednesdays. Instead of working from before dawn up to late into the night, on Wednesdays late afternoons the khalwa study would be suspended and the hayrān would be engaged in the preparation of the weekly karāma or balīlat al-arbi'a (Wednesday offering)⁽³⁾ which was usually a sort of grain and beans collected from about the village and cooked and eaten by the hayrān and their faki at the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

1. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al Damer, November, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.

4. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141.

Moreover, Thursday would be a half working day, and more important its afternoon was the beginning of the week-end.⁽¹⁾

All this would give to the new hūwār the impression that the khalwa was a pleasant educational environment.

However, when the child was officially presented to the fakī for admission, the latter would kindly receive him, bless him on the head and reassure his father that he would be instructed and brought up in the best possible way, for God's sake.⁽²⁾

Then, turning to the new hūwār, he would ask him about his name, his age, his relatives and friends amongst the hayrān. All this was meant to check on the child's ability to hear, understand and talk, and at the same time to establish a rapport between the hūwār and the fakī and diagnose some of the apparent difficulties of the child before assigning him to an advanced assistant.⁽³⁾

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1. The established weekly holiday in all Muslim countries has been Friday; in addition the afternoon of the preceding Thursday has been the start of the weekend. (See Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141).
 2. The khalwa teacher received no fees (see financing aspect below).
 3. Since the khalwa is open to all, no applicant is rejected, however, it was found helpful to give special care to those who needed it such as those who had speech difficulties. (Information from al-Naqar.)

The fakī would then provide the hūwār with the necessary writing implements⁽¹⁾ - a light lawh, an ink-pot, a pen and a piece of limestone.

Next, the khalwa shaykh or the fakī would write the verse "bism Allāhī al-Rahmān al-Rahīm" (In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful) at the top of the lawh. Underneath it, on a separate line, he would write the prayer "Rabbī sahhil wa yassir wa la tu'assir 'alaynā yā karīm" - meaning "Oh God, make it easier - and not difficult - for us, oh kind God".⁽²⁾

Then the khalwa (Sūfī) Shaykh would send the new hūwār to his deputy for teaching - the khalwa fakī, for teaching the Qur'ān⁽³⁾ - (at small village khalwas the fakī himself would have received him).⁽⁴⁾ The fakī, in turn, would appoint an advanced or semi-advanced hūwār to be in charge of the new hūwār and to teach him the alphabet and hence reading and writing.⁽⁵⁾

1. See the teaching aids, above; in Eastern and Western Sudan the hayrān were required to bring their own lawhs.

2. This has been an established practice at the main khalwa centres such as Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba and Wad al-Fādni.

3. The Sūfī Shaykh is now responsible for all administration, he does not teach himself, but delegates this function to an assistant - a fakī. (See Khalwas of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, above).

4. Such as village khalwas in Western Sudan.

5. See below.

Such a practice seems to have been in line with the system of individual instruction and at the same time it was a practical training to the prospective teacher.

On the other hand, in order to be able to learn the Qur'ān by heart - which is the main objective of the first stage of khalwa education - the hūwār would have first acquired the ability to read and write. Learning to read and write, it should be noted, was not an end in itself, but was regarded as an essential means to correctly read and learn the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾

This seems to have been dictated by the fact that in order to memorize the Qur'ān one would need to read it to oneself repeatedly; but there were not enough copies of the Qur'ān - especially during the Funj period. Hence, the necessity of first learning to read and write and copy the Qur'ān, portion by portion, on the wooden slates and every day memorizing the written text from one's lawh.⁽²⁾ Another obvious justification, and indeed an advantage, of acquiring the art of reading and writing, was that it would acquaint the learner with the Qur'ānic script and give him a practical training on the correct way of reading the Qur'ān, so that he would be able, not only to

1. See above.

2. This has been the established practice of khalwas all over the country. (See Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141.)

read it for himself, in future, when a copy was available⁽¹⁾, but also to teach it to others, even from memory.⁽²⁾ Further, as a literate person - with practice - he would be able to read any other written material.

At any rate, that seems to have been the universal khalwa method of introducing the hayrān to learn the Qur'ān. When teaching the art of writing the established khalwa practice has been to start with teaching the alphabet. Reference in al-Tabaqāt to such a practice could be traced back to the 11th/17th century when it was related that al-Massallamī b. Abū Wanīsa who, in order to have access to al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (d.1094/1683) and ask him for admission in the Sūfī Path, was said to have posed himself as an ignorant man coming from al-bādiya (the desert).⁽³⁾ Hence, he was admitted to khalwat al-Sibyān (the children's khalwa) where he started by learning the alphabet and the children were helping him trace the letters on his lawh.⁽⁴⁾

As alluded to before, almost the same pattern and methods of teaching and learning that were used during the Funj era were

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1. In contrast to the past, today more and more copies of the Qur'ān are being donated to masjids and could be obtained by large khalwas, yet the khalwa fakīs stick to their traditional methods.
 2. Most of the teachers of the khalwa teach from memory. (The writer's visits to the khalwas.)
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.84.
 4. Ibid.

reported to have been perpetuated by the traditional khalwa fakīs even up to the present time.⁽¹⁾ In other words, the present day traditional khalwa methods of teaching and learning could be regarded as a reflection of the methods and practices of the Funj period. This could be substantiated by surveying the methods of teaching and learning now and then. Below is an illustration of how the ability of reading and writing was taught at the khalwa and how then the process of teaching and learning the Qur'ān was accomplished.

The stage of reading and writing was usually started by learning the alphabet according to the following steps.

First, the fakī, using a date-stone⁽²⁾ would draw horizontal lines on the white-washed sides of the lawh⁽³⁾. Then he would write - using the pen, dipped into al-'amār⁽⁴⁾ (the ink) the first group of the alphabet, ا alif (a) ب bā (b) ت tā(t) and ث thā (th) on one line⁽⁵⁾, and underneath that he would write the same letters, but using a date-stone instead of the pen, in order to make them just visible for al-hūwār to trace on them, using pen and 'amār, for practice.⁽⁶⁾

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1. See the Attitudes towards khalwa education under the Turco-Egyptian rule, above.
 2. See Teaching Aids, below.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. At the khalwa the hūwār is taught the shape of the letter together with its classical Arabic name - shown underlined above.
 6. The writer's observations at the khalwas.

However, to make the instruction more effective, the fakī would call up the senior hūwār he had assigned to be in charge of the new hūwār in order to teach him the alphabet. Hence, the senior hūwār - the instructor - would take the beginner hūwār (usually in the mornings and late afternoons) to the sandy courtyard of the khalwa. There, he would write the first four letters of the alphabet assigned to the new hūwār, one by one, on the sand,⁽¹⁾ and while doing so, he (the instructor) would pronounce the name of each letter and the new hūwār would repeat after him.⁽²⁾ The new hūwār would then be instructed to write each letter, in turn, on the sand underneath the letters written by his instructor pronouncing the name of each letter as he copied it.⁽³⁾ Then, under the direct supervision of his instructor, the hūwār would practice writing down each and all the assigned letters several times on sand.⁽⁴⁾ Finally, the new hūwār would be instructed to trace the same letters he had learnt on his lawh and would be asked to memorize them by heart.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Note the use of sand as a teaching aid, see below.
 2. The writer's observations at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Tayba, Wad al-Fādnī and Hamishkorayb.
 3. The writer's observations at the khalwas.
 4. Information from the khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī and Hamishkorayb and al-Fashir.
 5. Ibid.

The following day the new huwār would continue practising each of the assigned group of letters, from memory, on sand.⁽¹⁾ When he mastered that he would be tested by his instructor who, when satisfied about his 'pupil's' achievement, would teach him the next group of letters.⁽²⁾

Thus, the same procedure would be followed in teaching and learning the rest of the alphabet:

ج jīm (j) ح hā (h) and خ khā (kh); and د dāl (d) and ذ dhāl (dh); ر rā (r) and ز zayn (z); س sīn (s) and ش shīn (sh); ص sād (s) and ض dād (d); ط tā (t) and ظ zā (z); ع ‘ayn (‘) and غ ghayn (gh); ف fā (f) and ق qāf (q); ك kāf (k) and ل lām (l); م mīm (m) and ن nūn (n); ه hā (h) and و wāw (w); لا lāmālif (la) and ي ya (y).

Secondly, the new huwār would be taught by his instructor to recognize and memorize those letters which had dots and those without dots as follows.

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1. Information from the khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādni and Hamishkorayb and al-Fashir.
 2. The writer was told by the fakīs of the khalwa mentioned above that the established procedure they were following in teaching the learners was the one described here.

ا (alif) has no dots, ب (bā) has a dot underneath it, ت (tā) has two dots above it, ث (thā) has three dots above it, ج (jīm) has a dot underneath it, ح (hā) has no dots, خ (khā) has a dot above it, and so on with the rest of the letters.

Thirdly, the new hūwār would be taught the four grammatical signs:

a) nasba (fatha); b) khifda (kasra); c) ruf'a⁽¹⁾ (damma); and d) jazm (sukūn) as applied to each letter
 ا (a) nasab; ب ('ī) khifid; ج ('ū) rufu'; د (a') jazm
 ب (bā) nasab; پ (bī) khifid; ب (bū) rufu'; ب (ab) jazm.

These four grammatical signs would be applied to all the letters of the alphabet. Through repeated practice on the sand and finally on his lawh the new hūwār would have learnt these signs by heart.⁽²⁾

Fourthly, the new hūwār would be taught tanwīn as it was applied to each letter of the alphabet, as follows:

ب (bā) after tanwīn would be transformed into the following forms:

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1. The equivalent to the terms used by the khalwa is bracketed such as nasba (fatha), khifda (kasra), jazm (sukūn) and rufu' stands for damma. (Interview: ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq, at al-Sūfī.)
 2. The writer's observations at the khalwas.

بَّ (bann) = b+ nasbatayn (two strokes above the letter)
 بِ (bin) = b+ khifdatayn (two strokes underneath it)
 بٌ (bunn) = b+ ruf 'atayn (two commas above the letter)
 بْ (bb) = b+ jazm

Then the same tanwīn would be applied to the rest of the alphabet, such as: تَّ tann, تِ tinn, تٌ tunn, تْ t.

The new hūwār would practice writing these signs of tanwīn on each of the letters of the alphabet on sand and finally on his lawh and committing all to memory.

Fifthly, the hūwār would learn from his instructor the signs of tashdīd - (doubling of letters) in pronunciation, as it applies to the letters of the alphabet:

بَّب (bba), بَب (bbi) بُب (bbū);
 تَّت (tta) تَب (tti) تُب (ttu) and so on with the
 rest of the letters, and according to the manner of teaching and learning described above.

Sixthly, the long vowels. The hūwār would learn these in connection with each of the letters of the alphabet, as follows:

بَا (bā) learnt as bā jāb alif i.e., (the pronunciation

of ba with the long vowel ā would bring in the letter ā (alif)
ب. (bī) learnt as 'bī jāb yā', i.e., the pronunciation of b
 with the long vowel (ī) would bring in ي (ya). Similarly, بوا
 (bū) learnt as 'bū jāb waw wa alif', i.e., the long vowel 'ū'
 would bring in the two letters 'و' (wāw) and ا (alif).

The khalwa hayrān usually chant the three forms of vowels
 while writing or memorizing them: 'bā jāb alif, bī jāb yā, bū
jāb wāw wa alif'.⁽¹⁾ The same rule would apply to the rest of
 the letters which would be learnt in the same previous way.

It is worth noting that at some of the khalwas, such as
 Hamishkorayb in Eastern Sudan, the hayrān are taught these long
 vowels in a different pattern from the traditional one followed,
 almost, by all other khalwas. The Hamishkorayb version runs as
 follows: بَانَ (bāna) بِينَ (bīna) بُون (būna), i.e., they add the
 letter ن (nūn) after every long vowel.⁽²⁾ Then, in the same
 way, they apply these vowels with the rest of the letters, such
 as تَانَ (tāna) تِينَ (tīna) تُون (tūna)⁽³⁾ and so on.

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1. In the Sudanese colloquial Arabic the word jāb means
 brought in. It is a corrupted form of جاء came with
 see al-Tabaqāt, pp.123, 141, 208.
 2. These are meaningless words meant to give practice in the
 use of the vowels.
 3. Ibid.

In each of the above mentioned six steps, the hūwār would be expected to follow the procedure of learning described in respect to the first step - i.e., learning.

At this stage, when the hūwār had successfully learnt the alphabet with the different grammatical signs, described above, he would be trained to write down single words dictated to him by his instructor such as: كَتَبَ kataba كِتَابًا kitabān هَبَّ habba كَاتِبُونَ kātibūn, etc., in order to test the hūwār's newly acquired ability of reading and writing using the different signs he had been taught.⁽¹⁾

After acquiring the ability to combine letters and form words through dictation, the alphabetical stage would come to an end and a new advanced stage would start - learning the Qur'ān through writing.

Al-Ramya Stage

The culmination of the alphabetical stage and the beginning of writing the Qur'ān through dictation has always been exemplified in sūrat al-fātiha, (the opening chapter of the Qur'ān).

Reaching this stage was always regarded as a considerable

1. This procedure is used in almost all the khalwas visited by the writer.

step forward in the learner's academic progress. The hūwār would have been required by the fakī to have his lawh clean and white-washed by lime stone and lined and his pen prepared in the best condition and his ink-pot in its richest form.⁽¹⁾

The fakī then would dictate 'surat al-fātiḥa.' (Qur'ān,1) clearly, word for word, twice, reminding the hūwār of the grammatical signs. Whenever the hūwār finished writing a verse he would have been taught to repeat its last two words so that the fakī could continue dictating the following verse - i.e., the dictation would be geared to the learner's individual pace.⁽²⁾

When the hūwār finished writing 'sūrat al-fatiḥa.' the fakī would correct his writing paying particular attention to the spelling and grammatical signs. Then he would read the written text from the lawh and the hūwār would repeat after him.⁽³⁾

By this time the hūwār would have already learnt by heart 'surat al-fatiḥa.' from his parents, companions and the fakī. Testing his ability in memorization of the first chapter he had written on his lawh, the fakī would order the hūwār to stand up and recite the sūra, which he would do successfully, and to the

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1. The writer's observations at the khalwas of Kadabās and Wad al-Fādnī. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

satisfaction of the fakī.⁽¹⁾

Reaching this stage was always regarded as a landmark in the learner's khalwa study.⁽²⁾ For this reason the occasion would be celebrated by the khalwa and the parents of the child.⁽³⁾

From now on the hūwār would join a junior halqa of colleagues of similar age and standard presided over by an advanced hūwār - a halqa Shaykh.⁽⁴⁾ Here each hūwār would be dictated, individually - depending on his ability and the level he had reached - an appropriate portion of the Qur'ān.

This has been known as the stage of al-ramya. The ramya being the term denoting a portion of dictation from the Qur'ān - consisting of a verse or a part of it - literally meaning a "throwing".⁽⁵⁾ The idea and the practice was that the fakī or the halqa Shaykh surrounded by a halqa of hayrān of different standards would rapidly dictate, individually, to each one of them, from his memory, a verse or a part of the verse from the relevant and different chapters of the Qur'ān, each was learning.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, at the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān.
 2. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See the khalwa of Wad al-Fādni above, for reference to such junior halqas.
 5. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.60.
 6. Ibid.; the writer's observations.

In effect, he would be dictating, simultaneously, a number of pieces of dictation - portions of the Qur'ān - equivalent to the number of the hayrān constituting that halqa.⁽¹⁾

The procedure was that the halqa Shaykh, addressing a certain hūwār would dictate to him the first verse of the daily portion of the Qur'ān he had to learn. The hūwār, repeating the verse for himself in a low voice, would write it down on his lawh. Meanwhile, the halqa Shaykh would turn to another attentive hūwār and dictate to him the first verse of his relevant chapter and while he was taking it down, the teacher would move to a third, and a fourth, and so on.⁽²⁾

When a hūwār finished writing down the dictated verse, he would raise up his head and in order to draw the attention of the fakī, for continuation of the dictation, he would repeat loudly the last two or three words of the verse he had written. The teacher, then, in response to the hint of each pupil would dictate, each of them, the following relevant verse(s) of his assigned portion.⁽³⁾

However, as there were usually many hayrān of different standards

1. The writer's observations at Wad al-Fādnī and Hamishkorayb.

2. The writer's observation at Wad al-Fādnī and Hamishkorayb.

The halqa varies between a handful of hayrān to about forty for the well experienced fakī. (Information from al-fakī Amīr at Wad al-Fādnī.)

3. The writer's observation on his visit to the khalwas.

at the halqa, each shouting simultaneously the last words of his written verse, and since there were similarities of such hints the teacher had always to be on the alert, to sort out, and dictate to each pupil, the relevant continuation of his assignment.⁽¹⁾ Hence, the more experienced the teacher, the more qualified he would be to dictate or "throw" to any halqa of whatever size or standard it might be.⁽²⁾

Similarly, the more experienced al-hūwār, the better his ability would be to grasp al-ramya. For this reason when al-hūwār was able to memorize the verse that was dictated to him, at the rapid pace of al-fakī, and could write the whole of it on his lawh, without forgetting a word, he was said, in the terminology of the khalwa to have shāl al-ramya (attained the dictation level), which was normally reached by the average learner when he had learnt 1/4 of the Qur'ān - i.e., up to sūrat Yāsīn (Qur'ān, sura/36).⁽³⁾

The next stage would be the sihha (the correction)⁽⁴⁾ which was composed of two parts: a) correction of writing; b) correction

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1. The writer's observation at Hamishkorayb and Wad al-Fādnī.
 2. Often the fuqara' boost the size of their halqa for the ramya session - an indication of their experience and the advanced level of their students.
 3. Al-Bīlī, p.10.
 4. Information from the khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān.

of reading:

- (a) Each hūwār of the halqa would come forward, with his lawh to the teacher who would correct the spelling and the grammatical mistakes he might have done whether from dictation or from copying from the text of the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾
- (b) The teacher would, then, read the written text and the pupil would repeat after him - as a form of model reading. The same procedure would be followed with the rest of the hayrān of the halqa. Then, when the correction tasks were completed, the teacher would instruct his pupils to retire to their places and embark on learning by heart the written daily portion of the Qur'ān.

This would usually take the form, as correctly described by Trimingham, of all the hayrān of the different halqas chanting together in monotone, swaying back and forth in rhythm, droning the portions indefinitely until they were memorized.⁽²⁾

In the evening all the hayrān would assemble in the spacious courtyard of the khalwa round the huge wood fire or its symbol (since now, many of the big traditional khalwa centres have

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1. The teachers observations at Abū Qurūn, Tayba and Umm Dawwan Bān; see references to siḥḥa in al-Tabaqāt, pp.234, 284, 337.
 2. The writer's observations at the khalwas - Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.117.

introduced electricity).⁽¹⁾ The hayrān would be ready for recitation of the daily assignment of the Qur'ān before the khalwa Shaykh of the chief fakī.

This recitation has been known as the 'arda'.⁽²⁾ The recital was always very formal, the rules of the Qur'ānic recension were strictly observed.⁽³⁾ The fakī would usually be seated on his bed or prayer carpet and the hūwār would recite from a standing position with lawh standing at his side held by one hand.

If the 'arda' was satisfactory the hūwār would be passed for the daily assignment, but if he failed he would have to repeat the memorization and present himself the following day. In such a case he would be called muqayyim (staying in one place for a long time) - a repeater.⁽⁴⁾

Those who have passed would be allowed to wipe or wash off

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1. Almost all of the main khalwa centres have introduced electricity - such as Kadabās, Abū Qūrūn, Um Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādni, Tayba, Hamishkorayb.
 2. The origin of 'arda' could be traced back to the act of the Prophet of reciting the Qur'ān in its entirety before the angel Gabriel ('Alī, 'Abdallāh Yūsuf, op. cit., p.17; al-Bīlī, p. 9 ; see al-Tabaqāt, pp.284, 314 and 337 for references to al-'arda).
 3. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.63.
 4. Ibid.

their lawhs and prepare for learning the next section of the Qur'ān - in the same way.⁽¹⁾

As the hayrān of the khalwa, and indeed of each halqa, were of different standards the portions of the Qur'ān learnt varied in length from one to the other. Hence the junior hayrān would start by memorizing the shortest portion called the kharrūba (8-10 lines)⁽²⁾. It should be noted in this respect that the text of the Qur'ān, for the sake of learning, has been divided and subdivided according to the following order:⁽³⁾ thirty juz' (parts); each juz' has been divided and subdivided into smaller sections in such a way that the juz' is made up of eight maqra; the maqra is composed of two thumn - i.e., each of the thirty juz' (parts) of the Qur'ān is composed of sixteen thumns and each thumun is made of three kharrūbas.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, the smallest portion is the kharrūba which is assigned to beginners, and for the more advanced the hūwar in his learning of the Qur'ān - i.e., when reading the Qur'ān for al-'awda al-murra and al-'awda al-hilwa (second and third rounds) his daily assignment of the Qur'ān to memorize would be a thumn and a maqra respectively.⁽⁵⁾

For learning purposes the beginner learns the Qur'ān in a

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1. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl at Umm Dawwan Bān.
 2. Al-Bīlī, p.11.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid., information from the khalwa fakīs of Abū Qurūn and Kadabās.

reversed or ascending order - starting from the end and going to the beginning of the Book.⁽¹⁾ The reason and the established khalwa practice was always to teach the shorter sūras first and progress towards the longer.⁽²⁾

In his endeavour to learn the Qur'ān the hūwār would usually need to make four rounds of reading, writing, memorizing and reciting the whole of the text of the Qur'ān, in the manner described above.⁽³⁾

The first upward round is called the bādi' (the beginner's) stage. The subsequent rounds are usually done in the logical order - from the chapter of al-fātiḥa⁽⁴⁾, then al-baqara⁽⁵⁾ (the cow) and down to the last sūra of al-nās.⁽⁶⁾

The second downward round is called al-'awda al-murra (the bitter round), the third downward round is called al-'awda al-hilwa (the sweet round), and the final one is called al-khatma

1. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq at al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq.
2. This procedure has been followed all over the khalwas and at the modern schools too. The shorter sūras are easier to memorize and would be needed for prayer.
3. These are bādi' (beginner), 'awda murra (bitter round), al-'awda al-thāniya (the second round) and al-khatma (the sealing or the final).
4. Qur'ān, sūra 1.
5. Qur'ān, sūra 2.
6. Qur'ān, sūra 114.

(the sealing) round.⁽¹⁾

The duration of thoroughly mastering the Qur'ān would naturally differ according to individual and environmental differences.

As alluded to above, in regions where Arabic was not the mother tongue of the learners - such as some parts of Dārfūr or in the Beja region of Hamishkorayb, it seems to have required a long period for learners to master learning the Qur'ān - much longer than it would have taken Arabic speaking learners of khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan.⁽²⁾

To further illustrate this, the writer was informed that at the beginning it took learners of the khalwa of Hamishkorayb four years just to learn reading and writing and to memorize the first three juz' of short suras of the Qur'ān.⁽³⁾ As a result of a number of factors associated with the muhājirīn khalwa camps such as that of Nāmī, Ṭawīla District in Dārfūr, a muhājir would need about fifteen years just to learn the Qur'ān⁽⁴⁾ - in comparison to

1. Al-Bīlī, p.12.

2. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr at Hamishkorayb and al-fakī 'Abd Mūla Abū 'Ushar, Nāmī, Ṭawīla; see Nūr, table 6.

3. Information by al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr at Hamishkorayb, 2nd December 1981.

4. The writer's visit to the muhājirīn camp at Nāmī, Ṭawīla, Dārfūr.

an average four years a learner would need to memorize the Qur'ān at the khalwa centres of Central and Northern Sudan.⁽¹⁾

Al-Sharāfa

The word stands for "honouring", it refers to the traditional celebration which was made whenever an individual hūwār, at the bādi' stage (the beginner's) reached a certain level of achievement in his academic progress, i.e., in his effort to write and memorize the Qur'ān.

The first sharāfa experienced by a beginner was that of sūrat al-fātiha ⁽²⁾ (the opening chapter of the Qur'ān), also known as sharāfat al-hamd , for the first verse of that sūra starts with the words al-hamd lillāh (Praise be to God).

The sharāfa on the lawh takes the form of a rectangular frame of design or decoration of colours available to the hayrān - usually black, white, yellow and red.⁽³⁾ There were always advanced hayrān who had acquired more experience, or who were gifted, in making colourful sharāfa or decoration around the written portion of the Qur'ān reached by the celebrated hūwār.⁽⁴⁾

1. Nūr, p.10

2. Qur'ān, sura 1.

3. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.

4. Information from khalwa fakīs at UmmDawwan Bān.

Usually such a sharāfa around the lawh was done free of charge, but sometimes the expert hūwār would charge a nominal fee.⁽¹⁾

The celebration of the sharāfa occasion would take the following form. The honoured hūwār, in accordance with the khalwa tradition, would carry his decorated lawh in front of him and, accompanied by two or three of his fellows, would first go to his home - to his parents who would be greatly pleased with their son's achievement.⁽²⁾ Hence, they would prepare special food for the occasion - which would vary depending on the condition of the family and the stage of the sharāfa - and bring it to the khalwa for the fakī and the hayrān.

Further, and also according to the tradition, the celebrated hūwār and his companions would go around the houses of the village to show his sharāfa and ask for karāma (offering) on the occasion.⁽³⁾ The families would usually offer them some grain and dry beans - which the hūwār and his companions would take to the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾ There, all the collected stuff would be boiled in a large pot by the hayrān and when cooked, all of them, together with their fakī, would have their share of it. Then, all would read prayers for

1. Information from khalwa fakīs at Umm Dawwan Bān.

2. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

the hūwār concerned, for more progress.⁽¹⁾

Usually on such an occasion the hayrān would take the late afternoon off.

The practical value of the sharāfa was that it served as a 'certificate' or testimony of the level the student reached in his academic progress. It also seems to have been employed as a well-appreciated colourful reward for the hūwār's academic effort and also as an effective incentive for the hūwār to reach the next stage or sharāfa. It seems also to have served as a reward for the beginner in his effort to read and memorize the whole of the Qur'ān.

The different positions of al-sharāfa for the khalwa hūwār in his upward round to read and memorize the Qur'ān are as follows:⁽²⁾
a) al-fātiha (sūra 1); b) al-Bayyina (sūra 98); c) al-A'la (sūra 87)

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1. Al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59. Information also from the khalwa fakīs of Kadabās and Umm Ḍawwan Bān. However, these rituals of al-sharāfa are no longer practised at the khalwas but al-sharāfa occasions seem to be exploited for collecting food by al-muhājirīn in Dārfūr.
 2. These are the main positions which were used usually to monitor the learner's progress in his effort to cover the first round of reading and memorizing the Qur'ān. (Information from the khalwa fakīs of Kadabās, Umm Ḍawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādni.)

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| d) <u>al-Nabā'</u> (<u>sūra</u> 78) | e) <u>al-Jinn</u> (<u>sūra</u> 72) |
| f) <u>al-Mulk</u> (<u>sūra</u> 67) | g) <u>al-Mumtahina</u> (<u>sūra</u> 60) |
| h) <u>al-Rahmān</u> (<u>sūra</u> 55) | i) <u>Muhammad</u> (<u>sūra</u> 47) |
| j) <u>Yā sīn</u> (<u>sūra</u> 36) | k) <u>Maryam</u> (<u>sūra</u> 19) |
| l) <u>Kahf</u> (<u>sūra</u> 18) | m) <u>al-Tawba</u> (<u>sūra</u> 9) |
| n) <u>al-A'rāf</u> (<u>sūra</u> 8) | o) <u>al-Baqara</u> (<u>sūra</u> 2) |

When successfully memorizing al-Baqara the huwār would have in effect accomplished the first khatma (sealing of the Qur'ān).

Whenever al-hūwār successfully progressed in his study his parents, depending on their economic conditions, would usually prepare a meal or feast and a present to the fakī. At first it would be of little cost but with their son advancing in his studies the value of the feast and the present of the fakī would be of higher value too.⁽¹⁾ For example, while for al-sharāfa of al-Bayyina (sūra 98) it was a qadah of 'asīda (a large basin-like dish of traditional food), the feast for reaching Yā-sīn (sūra 36) which represents one quarter of the Qur'ān, a lamb would be offered; and when reaching al-Kahf (sūra 18) which represents one half of the Qur'ān, a big ram was slaughtered, but when reaching the khatma (sealing) stage, a bull would be offered. Correspondingly the khalwa fakī would be given appropriate

1. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq, al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq; and al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, Umm Dawwan Bān.

presents - in cash and in the form of clothes.⁽¹⁾

When the hūwār finally graduates, however, that would be the biggest occasion to celebrate, at the khalwa and at his home.⁽²⁾

Al-Tabaqāt refers to this occasion when al-fakī 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd (d.1127/1715) was given, as a present, on that occasion, a horse, by the father of his ex-student, 'Abd al-Rahmān Walad Duwayh.⁽³⁾

At present, the graduate hūwār would distribute dates and tea to the rest of al-hayrān and make celebrations at home.⁽⁴⁾

1. Information from the khalwa fakīs of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādnī.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.286.

4. The khalwa fakīs of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādnī.

C. The Teaching of 'ilm

As has been alluded to above, after learning the Qur'ān at the first stage of khalwa education, desirous students would travel to a halqa of a renowned teacher of 'ilm - at the higher stage.⁽¹⁾ Here the learner would embark upon studying the subject - a branch of 'ilm or a book - that this teacher was reputed for and after mastering that he would move to another teacher for another subject or book and might go to a third one, and finally he would usually join the Ṣūfī Path.⁽²⁾

The procedure of learning 'ilm was to study one book at a time, and to start with the easier - and not to study more than one subject or text-book simultaneously, for it was believed that such a practice might hamper learning.⁽³⁾ This could be traced back to an old Arab tradition.⁽⁴⁾

Al-Tabaqāt is full of references to illustrate this point; al-Shaykh 'Alī b. Barri (d.1073/1663) studied the Qur'ān under

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1. Such as the khalwas of the Sons of Jābir, Ṣughayrūn, (above).
 2. See "The academic qualifications ... of khalwa teachers", above.
 3. Interview with ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq, al-Ṣūfī, November 1981.
 4. A father advising the mu'addib of his sons said "Do not move them from one 'ilm to another until they have mastered the one before it (Ibn Qutayba, 'Uyūn al-Akhbār, vol.II, Part V, p.167).

al-faqīh Busbār, Khalīl under al-Shaykh Ṣughayrūn, theology under al-faqīh Ḥusayn Abū Sha'ar and then followed al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Aghar.⁽¹⁾

Al-faqīh Dayfallāh b. 'Alī (d.1095/1684) learnt the Qur'ān at the mosque of al-Ḥalfāyā, studied al-Risāla and Khalīl under al-Shaykh al-Zayn b. Ṣughayrūn, tawhīd and grammar under Ḥamīd al-Ṣārīdī, and followed al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī in the Ṣūfī Path.⁽²⁾

For more examples, the surveys of khalwa centres described above could be consulted.⁽³⁾ Some of the outstanding teachers, however, were reported to have been conducting several courses of 'ilm each day - each involving the study of a different text-book - such as al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd (d.1127/1715)⁽⁴⁾ and before him al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (d.1094/1683)⁽⁵⁾ and his contemporaries al-faqīh 'Ammār b. 'Abd al-Ḥafīz⁽⁶⁾ and

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.295.

2. Ibid., p.246.

3. See for example the khalwa centres of "The sons of Jābir" and those of Ṣughayrūn and al-Ghubush, above. The notes on the biographies of 'ulamā' of al-Tabaqāt give ample evidence.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.282-5.

5. Ibid., pp.261-2.

6. Ibid., pp.262-3.

al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Qaddāl b. al-Farādī.⁽¹⁾

The same practice was said to have been continued during the Turco-Egyptian era. Al-Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim b. Dafa'allāh, describing the procedure of the study of 'ilm during his khalwa days at al-Masīd, at the end of the Turco-Egyptian period, was reported to have stated that they would study one text-book after the other - starting with the easiest of each subject.⁽²⁾ For example, in the study of fiqh they would start with al-Ashmāwī, and then al-Risāla and, at last, study Khalīl.⁽³⁾ Similarly, when studying Arabic grammar, they would start with al-Ajrūmiyya and end with al-Alfiyya.⁽⁴⁾

Almost the same trend and practices were confirmed to have been adhered to at the present time.⁽⁵⁾

As to the actual procedure and techniques of instruction in an 'ilm lesson, al-Tabaqāt gives brief and general references to this matter. The procedure followed by al-faqīh 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Usayd in teaching the 'ilm lessons and text-books could

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.262.

2. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.25.

3. Ibid., p.26.

4. Ibid.

5. Interview with ustādh 'Uthmān 'Abd al-Raḥmān, al-Sūfī, November, 1981.

illustrate the point.⁽¹⁾ The same procedure was perpetuated during the subsequent periods - except for the Mahdiyya during which the teaching of 'ilm was almost banned.⁽²⁾ Further elaboration is given below.

The teacher would sit on his mat surrounded, in a semi-circle, by the students of that subject, or indeed of the text-book studied, each with a lawh or a notebook in hand.⁽³⁾ He would open the session by reading al-fātiha and praise on the Prophet and then would beckon to an advanced student of 'ilm called al-muqābil (i.e. the opposite) to introduce the new lesson.⁽⁴⁾ Al-muqābil would read the whole text of the lesson of the day, then the faqīh would read the same text or even recite it from memory, stopping at each phrase, explaining the linguistic and giving the general meaning.⁽⁵⁾ The students would copy the lesson on their lawhs and embark on its memorization. Next day he would read the hāshiya (the commentary) on the text.⁽⁶⁾ Lastly the teacher would give the students a chance to discuss the lesson, relate it to practical problems of life - illustrating

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.283-4; see "the Daily Programmes", below.

2. See Attitudes and Condition of khalwas under "the Mahdiyya period", above.

3. Interview with ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq at al-Sūfī.

4. Ibid.

5. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.40.

6. Ibid.

by examples - and the teacher might add his own commentary.⁽¹⁾
Meanwhile, these advanced students would go, one by one, to the teacher to recite the lesson they had copied and memorized, and a new assignment would be set.⁽²⁾

The duration of the lesson would usually take about two to three hours,⁽³⁾ or the period between two consecutive prayers - zuhr and 'asr, 'asr and maghrib, maghrib and 'ishā.⁽⁴⁾

The teacher, as indicated above, would be conducting several different lessons to different groups of students - i.e., the groups would rotate around the same teacher assisted by a muqābil from each group.⁽⁵⁾

At present, the teaching of 'ilm is rare at the khalwas.⁽⁶⁾
It has been taken over by the modern religious institutions, and the traditional khalwas have been, in effect, restricted to the teaching of the Qur'ān - described above.⁽⁷⁾

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1. The same method was confirmed to the writer by ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq at al-Sūfī, November 1981.
 2. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.119.
 3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.40.
 4. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Very few khalwas teach 'ilm such as Hamishkorayb and Kadabas, above.
 7. See "Methods of teaching the Qur'ān", above.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUBJECTS, BOOKS AND TEACHING AIDS

A. The Qur'ān

This is the main source and text book. It has been used as both a means of learning (reading and writing) and above all as an end in itself, as the Muslims' sacred Book to be learnt, and its teachings to be complied with.

In the past there were a few handwritten copies of the Qur'ān for the khalwa fakīs and the advanced hayrān - all bound loose in order to be easily divided into parts and distributed to the hayrān concerned, each according to his standard.⁽¹⁾

Today there are still very few copies in circulation in each khalwa, despite the availability of printed copies of the Qur'ān. This seems to be so because khalwas, under their traditional fakīs, still rely more on memorization and the use of their lawhs, than on reading from the printed text of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

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1. Interview with al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.
 2. From the writer's observations and from confirmation from all the khalwa fakīs he has met, this seems to have been the universal practice of khalwas.

B. 'Ilm, Books and Commentaries

Although there seems to have been a consensus on what was taught at the basic stage of khalwa education - as exemplified in the teaching of the Qur'ān and the ability to read and write, no such agreement on what specifically was to be taught at the higher stage of the khalwa seems to have been reported. This seems to have been so because of the fluid nature of the term 'ilm which came to incorporate not only the religious sciences but also other studies, regarded as complementary to it and helpful in understanding the religious texts - such as literature, grammar, language, commentary on 'izāt and qasas - and without which the education of men of religion was considered as incomplete.⁽¹⁾

Further, each khalwa remained autonomous from the others - drawing its own policy and devising its own curricula and syllabuses.⁽²⁾

However, owing to the state of ignorance under which the first generations of Muslims of the early Funj period were living, the pioneer teachers of that period found it necessary, in order to consolidate Islam, to concentrate on the essentials -

1. 'Abdīn, p.94.

2. Al-Bāqir, "Religious Education", p.80. Today the teaching of 'ilm is conducted by only a handful of khalwas, such as al-Sūfī al-Azraq and Hamishkorayb, which still use a selection of the textbooks mentioned here (the writer's visit to the khalwas).

the basic Shari'a studies - through the study of a few abridged text-books and commentaries that were in vogue in the Muslim world at the time, as will be indicated below.

Owing to the conservative nature of the khalwa,⁽¹⁾ and because of the continuous need to, and popularity of, these studies and books among the Sudanese of the past periods, the same type of education - in terms of subjects and text-books - introduced by the khalwa founder or its first renowned teacher(s), was perpetuated by the subsequent successors and even extended to other regions by the khalwa graduates. Hence, as was alluded to above, during the Funj era, next to the Qur'an, the most popular subjects taught at the khalwa were:

a) fiqh, which seems to have been introduced, first, by al-Shaykh Mahmūd al-'Arakī,⁽²⁾ and later emphasized and disseminated on a wider scale through the efforts of the Sons of Jābir in the 10th/16th century, and seems to have been the most popular subject afterwards.⁽³⁾ The popularity of fiqh among the first generations of the Funj period seems to have arisen in response to a vital need of knowledge of the Shari'a law to regulate the life of the Sudanese Muslims then.⁽⁴⁾

1. See pp.413-6, above.

2. See the reference to al-Shaykh Mahmūd al-'Arakī, Part I.

3. See the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir, Part I, Chapter Four; see Hillelson, SNR, p.200.

4. See Part I, Chapter One, above.

(a-1) Khalīl and al-Risāla

At any rate, during the Funj era, the most popular fiqh books were the two Malikite standard text-books, Mukhtasar Khalīl or Khalīl⁽¹⁾, and al-Risāla,⁽²⁾ which were both introduced in the Funj land by al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Būlād b. Jābir.⁽³⁾

These two text-books were spread in the Funj lands mainly through the outstanding students of the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir, who flourished as prominent khalwa teachers in their own

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1. The author was al-Shaykh Khalīl b. Ishāq (d.766/1365) - a Malikite jurist who was said to have been in charge of al-fatwa in Egypt. The book was used at al-Azhar and was popular in al-Maghrib, Egypt and the Funj kingdom. It was said to have been translated into French (Qaribullāh, p.43).
 2. The author of al-Risāla was Imām Abū 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Zayd of Qayrawān (d. 386 A.H.). He was head of the Malikite sect during his time. The book was originally written for beginners; in the Sudan it was taught as a popular fiqh text-book - usually before Khalīl in order (al-Tabaqāt, p.46).
 3. See the khalwa of the Sons of Jābir, Part I, Chapter Four, above.

right, and continued the efforts of their teachers.⁽¹⁾

(a-2) Shurūh (sing. sharh) and hawāshī (sing. hāshiya)
on Khalīl and al-Risāla

As complementary to Khalīl and al-Risāla, al-Tabaqāt includes references to a number of shurūh (commentaries) and hawāshī (glossaries) on these two text-books and others, and which were in circulation in the Sudan, such as:

1. Reference could be made to the following:

- (i) Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān who flourished as a khalwa teacher at Nūrī in the Shāyqiyya region, and to his descendants afterwards (see al-Tabaqāt, pp.257, 351, 272, 227, 309, 280, 282-4, 351 and 352).
- (ii) Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn and successors at al-Abwāb (al-Tabaqāt, pp.361-2, 246, 352, 287 and 363).
- (iii) Al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī and successors at Abū Ḥarāz on the Blue Nile (al-Tabaqāt, pp.253, 323, 326, 161, 91-2, 338 and 335).
- (iv) Al-faqīh al-Masallamī Abū Wanīsa and successors (al-Tabaqāt, pp.80, 272-3, 80-81, 83 and 373).
- (v) Al-Shaykh Ya'qūb b. Bān al-Naqā' and successors (al-Tabaqāt, pp.373-4, 325 and 329).
- (vi) Al-faqīh Dayfallāh b. 'Alī and descendants at al-Ḥalfāya (al-Tabaqāt, pp.246, 364, 274 and 188-9).

- (i) 'Abd al-Bāqī, Sharḥ 'Abd al-Bāqī 'alā Khalīl⁽¹⁾ which was first introduced in the Funj land by al-faqīh Ḥamid al-Layyin.⁽²⁾
- (ii) Al-Ajhūrī, Sharḥ al-Ajhūrī 'alā Khalīl, 3 commentaries, large 12 volumes; medium 5 volumes; and small 2 volumes.⁽³⁾
- (iii) _____, Sharḥ al-Risāla.⁽⁴⁾
- (iv) _____, Ḥaṣhiya 'alā Sharḥ al-Tatā'ī 'alā al-Risāla.⁽⁵⁾
- Al-faqīh Muḥammad Dūlīb (11th century A.H.) claimed the two commentaries of al-Ajhūrī on Khalīl and of al-Kharāshī on al-Risāla⁽⁶⁾ and was said to have taught them at his khalwa centre at al-Dabba, south of Dongola.⁽⁷⁾

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1. The author 'Abd al-Bāqī b. Yūsuf...al-Zurqānī, the Mālikite 'ālim (born and lived in Egypt 1020/1610 - 1099/1688); he taught at al-Azhar and among his many works was his famous sharḥ on Khalīl (which was later printed in Egypt in 1303 A.H., in 6 vols. (al-Ṭabaqāt, p.183, n.12).
2. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.183.
3. The author was 'Alī b. Zayn al-'Ābidīn...al-Ajhūrī who became Shaykh of the Malikites in his country Egypt at his time (967/1560 - 1066/1656). Of his popular works was his three shurūḥ (commentaries) on Khalīl (al-Ṭabaqāt, p.52, n.11).
4. Al-Ajhūrī also wrote a sharḥ on al-Risāla (al-Ṭabaqāt, p.52, n11).
5. See n.(ix).
6. See n.(v).
7. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.349.

- (v) Al-Kharāshī, Sharh al-Kharāshī 'alā Mukhtasar Khalīl.⁽¹⁾
- (vi) Al-Sanhūrī, Hāshiya 'alā Mukhtasar Khalīl.⁽²⁾
- (vii) Al-Tatā'ī, Fath al-Jalīl 'alā Mukhtasar Khalīl,⁽³⁾ which was a large commentary on Khalīl.
- (viii) _____, Jawāhir al-Durar, a smaller commentary on Khalīl, too, by the same author.⁽⁴⁾
- (ix) _____, Sharh al-Risāla.

(a-3) The contribution of the Sudanese 'ulamā':

At this stage the Sudanese 'ulamā', too, following the footsteps of their contemporary 'ulamā' in the Muslim world, wrote a number of commentaries on fiqh, especially on Khalīl and al-Risāla and on other subjects. The commentaries on Khalīl

1. The author, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Kharāshī (1016/1607 - 1101/1690) was an outstanding Malikite 'ālim who taught at al-Azhar. Of his many works was his highly appreciated commentary on Khalīl (above) (al-Tabaqāt, p.77, n.13).
2. The author, Sālim al-Sanhūrī (945/1538 - 1015/1606) was a mufti of the Malikite (al-Tabaqāt, p.101, n.14).
3. The author was Abū 'Abdallāh Shams al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Tatā'ī, who resigned his post as a Malikite qādī to embark on writing. Of his popular works were his two commentaries on Khalīl ((vii) and (viii) above) and his commentary on al-Risāla (ix), above). (Al-Tabaqāt, pp.300 and 179, n.16).
4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.179, n.16.

and al-Risāla were exemplified in the following:

- (i) Al-faqīh Dayfallāh b. 'Alī (d.1095/1684), Hāshiya 'alā Sharh Mukhtasar Khalīl.⁽¹⁾
- (ii) Al-faqīh al-Mudawwī Akaddāwī al-Misrī (d.1095/1684), wrote Sharh 'Aqīdat al-Risāla, and al-Hāshiya which was considered as his best work.⁽²⁾
- (iii) Al-faqīh Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash, al-Hāshiya 'alā Khalīl.⁽³⁾
- (iv) Al-faqīh Mukhtār b. Jūdāt Allāh, Sharh al-Risāla.⁽⁴⁾

(a-4) Other Mālikite fiqh books and commentaries

In addition to Khalīl, al-Risāla and to their shurūh and hawāshī, the Sudanese 'ulamā' also used other Malikite fiqh works at their khalwas, of which the following could be mentioned:

- (i) Al-Akhdarī, Mukhtasar al-Akhdarī fī al-'ibādāt.⁽⁵⁾ The

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1. The author was the great-grandfather of the author of al-Tabaqāt, whose father relied on it in his teachings at al-Ḥalfāya (al-Tabaqāt, p.246).
 2. The author was the grandson of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Misrī, a student of Sālim al-Sanhūrī (see above), (al-Tabaqāt, pp.103-4).
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.358.
 4. Ibid., p.346.
 5. The author was 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Akhdarī, from Algeria (918/1512 - 983/1575) (al-Tabaqāt, p.283, n.21).

book was a summary on religious observance and was meant for the instruction of beginners, and was among the text-books used by al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd, at his khalwa, at Nūrī.⁽¹⁾

(ii) al-faqīh Mukhtar Jūdāt Allāh, Sharḥ Mukhtasar al-Akhdarī.⁽²⁾

(iii) Al-'Ashmāwī, Matn al-'Ashmāwiyya, an introduction on Malikite fiqh, was used also by al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd.⁽³⁾

(iv) Al-Shabārkhitī, Sharḥ al-Shabārkhitī 'ala al-'Ashmāwiyya, introduced into the Sudan by al-faqīh Ḥamid al-Layyin.⁽⁴⁾

(v) Sahnūn, al-Mudwwana al-Kubra, a compilation of about 36,000 of the fatwas of al-Imām Mālik b. Anas, was arranged by his followers and was spread especially in al-Maghrib and hence contributed to the spread of the Malikite rite.⁽⁵⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.283.

2. Ibid., p.346.

3. The author was Imām 'Abd al-Bārī al-'Ashmāwī al-Rifā'ī, (al-Tabaqāt, pp.283,n22 and 283).

4. The author was Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Shabārkhitī, a Mālikite 'ālim at al-Azhar (al-Tabaqāt, p.183).

5. The compilers were first Asad b. al-Furāt, then reorganized by Sahnūn - 'Abd al-Salām b. Sa'īd al-Tunūkhī (2nd century A.H.) (al-Tabaqāt, p.185, n.7).

It was used in the Sudan by khalwa Shaykhs as a source book.⁽¹⁾

(a-5) Shāfi'ite fiqh:

Although as could be seen from the above the dominant teachings in the Sudan at the time were those of the Mālikite rite, yet al-Tabaqāt makes references to individual teachers who were engaged on the dissemination of the Shāfi'ite madhhab. Al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Qarm al-Kimānī who came to the Sudan and settled at Berber in the second half of the 10th/16th century was said to have introduced the Shāfi'ite madhhab and as a result of his efforts it spread into the Gezira.⁽²⁾ However, due to the dominance of the Mālikite teachings and their wide-spread through the khalwa teachers and students of the popular Mālikite fiqh and textbooks, as illustrated above, the Shāfi'ite rite lost the battle to the Mālikite, and seems to have been restricted to the coastal region of the Red Sea - to the districts of Suwākin and Tokar.⁽³⁾

The Shāfi'ite books which were in use during the Funj period were:

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1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.185.
 2. Ibid., pp.43, 345-6.
 3. Ibid., p.6.

- Zakariyya al-Anṣārī, Manhaj al-Tullāb⁽¹⁾, and
- al-Nawawī, Abū Zakariyya, Minhaj al-Tālibīn.⁽²⁾

Both text-books were used by the adherents of the Shāfi'ite rite.⁽³⁾

(a-6) 'Ilm al-Farā'id (Islamic Law of Inheritance)

This science - or branch of fiqh - was said to have been very popular amongst the early Muslim generations who were greatly concerned with the settlement of disputes on practical problems of inheritance in accordance to the Sharī'a law, especially problems arising from the distribution of land and animals and other types of property.⁽⁴⁾ It was concerned with all aspects of "Islamic law of descent and distribution", and hence it became popular.

This branch of fiqh was reported to have been introduced into the Funj kingdom by al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Gharm al-Kimānī, the Shāfi'ite, who taught it to the following Sudanese

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1. The author was Zakariyya b. Muḥammad Zayn al-Dīn al-Anṣārī, (d.926/1520); he was a Shāfi'ite Ṣūfī and at one time reluctantly accepted the post of a qādī (al-Tabaqāt, p.234, n.2).
 2. The author was the Shāfi'ite faqīh, Abū Zakariyya Muḥyī al-Dīn b. Yahya b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (Syria) (d.676/1277), (al-Tabaqāt, p.234, n.1 and 2).
 3. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.234, 233, 260, 300 and 249.
 4. Ibid., p.7.

'ulamā': (1)

- al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī,
- al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān Ḥamadū who, in turn taught it to his son Mālik,
- al-Qādī Dushayn, and
- al-faqīh Ibrāhīm al-Faradī.

Of those who became highly reputed for the dissemination of 'ilm al-farā'id were:

- i) al-faqīh Ibrāhīm b. 'Abbūdī, who was said to have written a hāshiya on the subject, which he called al-Far-adīyya.⁽²⁾
Hence, he came to be known as Ibrāhīm al-Faradī.⁽³⁾
- ii) al-faqīh Mālik b. 'Abd al-Rahmān Ḥamadū was reported to have become highly versed in the science of inheritance and wrote three treatises on the subject. Kubra (major), wusta (medium) and sughra (junior) were described as being most useful.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.354-5.

2. Ibid., p.80.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.351.

b. tawhīd, 'aqā'id and kalām

The next popular subject to fiqh learnt at the second stage of the khalwas of the Funj and Turco-Egyptian periods was said to have been dogmatic theology, which was referred to in al-Tabaqāt by three interrelated terms - tawhīd, aqā'id and kalām.⁽¹⁾

The study of theology was mainly centred on the text-book in vogue - Matn al-Sanūsiyya, which was a prolegomena in tawhīd (theology) and had three treatises on the creed:⁽²⁾

- (i) Kubra al-Sanūsiyya, known also as 'Aqīdat Ahl al-Tawhīd (the creed of believers in the oneness of God);
- (ii) Wusta al-Sanūsiyya, known as al-Murshida,
- (iii) Sughra al-Sanūsiyya, also called Umm al-Barāhīn (Mother of Arguments).⁽³⁾

(b-1) Of the main 'ulamā' and khalwa Shaykhs who contributed to the dissemination of this science through teaching at their khalwas or through writing sharh or hāshiya, mention could be

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.6; Hillelson, SNR, p.200; Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.119.

2. The author was 'Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Abī Ya'qūb al-Ḥusaynī of Tilmisan, d.895/1480 (al-Tabaqāt, p.6; Qarībullāh, p.260).

3. The first treatise to have been used in the Funj land was Umm al-Barāhīn, the other two (i), (ii) above were introduced from Hijāz by al-faqīh Muḥammad b. 'Adlān al-Shāyqī (al-Tabaqāt, p.360),

made of al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab who, as has been indicated earlier, received instruction in the science 'ilm al-kalām or tawhīd, together with the sciences of the Qur'ān and Sūfism, at the hands of al-Shaykh al-Tilmisānī al-Maghribī.⁽¹⁾ He further received instruction in the same fields - al-'aqā'id - at the hands of al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Misrī.⁽²⁾

It was through the efforts of al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā and his students and al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Misrī and his students that the science of tawhīd was spread throughout the Funj lands. Of their students who contributed considerably in the field, reference should be made to al-Shaykh 'Alī b. Barri⁽³⁾, his student al-faqīh Arbāb b. 'Awn who became so known for teaching tawhīd or al-'aqā'id that he became better known as Arbāb al-'Aqā'id,⁽⁴⁾ al-Mudawwī Akaddawī⁽⁵⁾ and al-faqīh Muḥammad b. 'Adlān al-Shāyqī.⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.43, 348; see also the khalwa of Suwār al-Dhahab, above.

2. Ibid., p.101.

3. Ibid., pp.294-8.

4. Ibid., pp.100-1.

5. Ibid., pp.102-4.

6. Ibid., pp.359-360.

(b-2) Popular text-books of tawhīd

It was the above mentioned khalwa teachers who were again reported to have engaged in the dissemination of tawhīd through written work as could be illustrated below:

- 'Alī b. Barri wrote two commentaries on Umm al-Barāhīn ⁽¹⁾
 - (i) al-Sharh al-Kabīr (in 40 notebooks).
 - (ii) al-Sharh al-Saghīr (in 20 notebooks).
- Al-Mudawwī Akaddawī wrote
 - (iii) fourteen commentaries on Umm al-Barāhīn ⁽²⁾ and, in addition, he wrote
 - (iv) two commentaries on tawhīd. The large one in sixty notebooks and the small in seven. ⁽³⁾
- Al-faqīh Arbāb b. 'Awn (Arbāb al-Aqā'id)
 - (v) al-Jawāhir; ⁽⁴⁾
- Al-faqīh Muḥammad b. 'Adlān al-Shāyqī, ⁽⁵⁾
 - (vi) Hujjat al-'Ārifīn,

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.298.

2. Ibid., p.103.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.101.

5. Ibid., p.360.

(vii) 'Aqīdat al-Ash'ariyya, and

(viii) Tuhfat al-Tullāb.

In addition to the treatises of al-Sunūsī (al-Kubra and al-Wusta) which he introduced into the Funj lands when he came back from al-Hijāz, as indicated above.

c) Sūfism

As has been alluded to above, during the Funj period, and with the dominance of Sūfism, the Sūfī Shaykhs and their followers from the masses seem to have been preoccupied mainly with the practical aspect of Sūfism as exemplified in the manifestation of baraka and karāmāt.⁽¹⁾ However, in order to be initiated in the Sūfī Path and to progress along the Path, the followers had to perform certain rituals including memorization and recitation of certain awrād (sing. wird) or rātīb dictated to him by his Sūfī Shaykh.⁽²⁾ Al-Tabaqāt includes references to the initiation into the Sūfī Path, at the khalwas of certain individuals, to their awrād and how they came out as

1. See Part II, Chapter Two of this study, above.

2. The term wird or ratib denotes prescribed Sūfī prayers to be read or recited at specified times of the day, and could be accompanied by other physical Sūfī rituals (see Qarībullāh, pp.68-72).

awliyā' (1)

For more systematic study of Sūfism, certain Sūfī Shaykhs used to impart courses to their advanced students, within the khalwa curriculum, such as al-Shuyūkh: Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī⁽²⁾, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir,⁽³⁾ ‘Abdallāh al-‘Arakī,⁽⁴⁾ Dafa‘allāh al-‘Arakī,⁽⁵⁾ al-faqīh ‘Ammār b. ‘Abd al-Ḥafīẓ⁽⁶⁾ and al-faqīh Arbāb b. ‘Awn.⁽⁷⁾ Not only that but some of these Sūfī Shaykhs used to grant written ijāzāt (certificates) to their Sūfī students.⁽⁸⁾

— Sūfī textbooks and ahzāb:

It was said that the wide spread study of tawhīd text-books had helped in preparing the scene for the systematic study of Sūfism as a subject, for it seems to have highlighted the

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1. See al-Tabaqāt, pp.84-5; 241-2; and 230. For more details see Trimingham, The Sufi Orders, pp.186-90; and Qarībullāh, pp.68-72.
 2. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.345-6.
 3. Ibid., p.252.
 4. Ibid., p.67.
 5. Ibid., p.262.
 6. Ibid., p.263.
 7. Ibid., p.101.
 8. Ibid., pp.67 and 105.

importance of Sūfī dhikr and the phenomenon of karāmāt.⁽¹⁾

However, of the text-books and Aḥzāb that were in use by the Sūfīs in the Sudan, the following could be mentioned:

- 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir, Tarshīd al-Murīdīn fī 'ilm al-Tasawwūf.⁽²⁾
- Ibn 'Atallāh, Tāj al-Dīn Aḥmad, Latā'if al-Minan⁽³⁾
_____, Munjīyāt Ibn 'Atallāh.⁽⁴⁾
- Ismā'īl b. Makkī, Kitāb al-Ṭarīq wa Ādāb al-Dhikr⁽⁵⁾
- Al-Qādiriyya, al-Hizb al-Sayfī⁽⁶⁾.
- Al-Jazūlī, Abū 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Dalā'il al-Khayrāt wa Shawāriq al-Anwār fī al-Sala 'alā al-Nabī al-Mukhtār.⁽⁷⁾

1. Qarībullāh, p.260.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.252.

3. The book was about the glorious deeds of al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, head of the Shādhiliyya Order.

4. This was a Sūfī prayer written by Ibn 'Atallāh, (Qarībullāh, pp.241-2). See also al-Tabaqāt, pp.338, 292, 262, 81, 247.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.93.

6. This was a wird read by the followers of the Qādiriyya tariqa; it was said to have been originally written by Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. In the Sudan it was used by al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī (see 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.8; al-Tabaqāt, p.67, n.4).

7. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.78, 115, 243 and 292. See Qarībullāh, p.241.

- Al-Ghazālī, Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn.⁽¹⁾
- Al-Shādhilī, Abū al-Ḥasan, Aḥzāb al-Shādhilī,⁽²⁾
_____, Hizb al-Bahr⁽³⁾ and
_____, Hizb al-Barr,⁽⁴⁾
_____, Wazīfat al-Shādhilī.⁽⁵⁾
- Al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ṭayyib al-Bashīr,⁽⁶⁾ Hizb al-Amān,
_____, Hizb al-Jalāl;
_____, al-Jawhar al-Farīd fī 'ilm al-Wuhda wa
al-Tawhīd.

d) 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān (sciences of the Qur'ān):

The sciences of the Qur'ān include a variety of subjects.⁽⁷⁾
The Sudanese khalwa Shaykhs and students were more concerned with the practical aspects of these sciences than with the theoretical aspects,⁽⁸⁾ i.e., qirā'āt and tajwīd, and the rules of writing the transcription of the Qur'ān (the text) according to the rules set by the expert 'ulamā' in this field.⁽⁹⁾

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1. See the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān.
 2. Qarībullāh, p.243; al-Tabaqāt, pp.280, 198.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.156, n.3.
 6. Qarībullāh, pp.277-9.
 7. See al-Suyūṭī, Itqān al-Qur'ān, pp.1-13.
 8. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.6, 42, 90, 154-5, 280, 281, 283.
 9. See al-Dānī, Abū 'Amr, al-Muqni' fī Rasm Masāḥif al-Amsār wa Kitāb al-Naqt, especially Kitāb al-Naqt, pp.142-150 and al-Taysīr fī al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'.

At any rate the khalwa Shaykhs of the Funj period seem to have depended in this respect on al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab and his students such as 'Abdallāh al-Aghbash and descendants and students.⁽¹⁾

Of the text-books in common use at the time were the following:

- Abū al-Qāsim b. Fayza⁽²⁾, Matn al-Shāṭibiyya, or Hirz al-Amānī wa wajh al-Tahānī (which was a poem on writing the transcript of the Qur'ān - its rules).
- Al-Jazarī, Muḥammad, al-Jazariyya fī al-Tajwīd wa al-Tilāwa⁽³⁾ (which was also a poem on the readings of the Qur'ān and its recitation).

The Sudanese 'ulamā' also contributed in this respect by writing books or commentaries such as:

- al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Aghbash, al-Hidāya wa Tuhfat al-Dirāya fī Ahkām al-Qur'ān.⁽⁴⁾
- _____, Tuhfat al-Maddāt, which was a poem composed by 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Aghbash also, on the transcription of the Qur'ān.⁽⁵⁾

1. See the khalwa of al-Ghubush, above.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.283, n.19.

3. Ibid., p.103, n.8.

4. Ibid., p.281.

5. Ibid.

- al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Aghbash, Sharh al-Kharāzī,⁽¹⁾
- _____, Sharh al-Jazriyya,⁽²⁾
- al-faqīh al-Mudawwī Muḥammad Akaddāwī, Sharh Matn al-Jazriyya.⁽³⁾

(d-1) The Prevalent Reading of the Qur'ān in the Sudan:

Of the varient readings of the Qur'ān,⁽⁴⁾ two were introduced during the Funj period and have flourished in the country since then. These were:

- The reading of Warsh in Western Sudan - in Darfur and Kordufan.⁽⁵⁾
- The reading of Abī 'Umar in Northern and Central Sudan.⁽⁶⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.281.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.103.

4. The main readings of the Qur'ān were seven. Nāfi' b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, Imām of reciters of Medina; 'Abdallāh b. Kathīr, Imām of reciters of Mecca; 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir, Imām of reciters of Syria; Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', Imām of reciters of Baṣra; 'Āsim b. Abī Nujūd, Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt and 'Alī b. Ḥamza (all of Kūfa). (See al-Dānī, Abū 'Amr, al-Taysīr fī al-Qirā'āt sab', 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.141, n.1).

5. This is the reading of Warsh according to Nāfi', reciter of Medina.

6. The reading of Abī 'Umar al-Dūrī, according to 'Amr b. al-'Alā', Imām of reciters of Baṣra.

Both 'readings' are believed to have been transferred into the Sudan from al-Maghrib. With the spread of modern schools, a third 'reading' - the 'reading' of Ḥafs⁽¹⁾ - has steadily flourished in Northern and central Sudan.

In addition to the above, other subjects relatively of less popularity were taught at the khalwas. These were exemplified in the following.

(d-2) Tafsīr of the Qur'ān

A few khalwa Shaykhs were reported to have engaged in teaching of tafsīr of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾ Although no common textbooks were mentioned, yet there are references in later periods to al-Jalālayn⁽³⁾, which was said to have been handed down from the Funj period.⁽⁴⁾

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1. This refers to the riwāya of Ḥafs b. Sulaymān b. al-Mughīra (d.190 H.) of the "reading" of 'Āsim b. Abi al-Nujūd of Kūfa (d.127-8 H.) (al-Dānī, al-Taysīr, pp.6-7).
 2. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.262, 263. The khalwa of al-Majādhīb of al-Damer (interview with ustādh al-Naqar; and the khalwa of Kutrānj (Irshād, pp.10, 29, 40, 50-1).
 3. Irshād, p.65; see the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, above.
 4. The same text-book was used by the khalwa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq at al-Ḥadaref in 1981. (Interview with ustādh 'Uthmān 'Abd al-Rahmān, at his khalwa, November, 1981).

- (d-3) Hadīth: (Hadīth is mentioned here, though it is not directly related to 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān).

Similarly a few khalwas seem to have been teaching Hadīth as a subject to their students of 'ilm, such as the khalwas of Kutrānj⁽¹⁾, and al-Majādhīb⁽²⁾, in addition to individual khalwa teachers.⁽³⁾

Of the few text-books in use were the following:

- Mālik b. Anas, al-Muwatta (on Hadīth and fiqh)⁽⁴⁾ and
- al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn, al-Jāmi' al-Saghir min Hadīth al-Bashīr al-Nadhīr.⁽⁵⁾

e) Arabic grammar and sciences:

A few individual khalwa teachers were mentioned as having engaged in teaching Arabic grammar,⁽⁶⁾ and other sciences of the language such as al-badī' (science of metaphors), 'ilm al-bayān and 'ilm al-Ma'ani (both could be termed as rhetoric),

1. Irshād, pp.10, 29, 40, 50-51.

2. Information from ustādh al-Naqar.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.263.

4. Ibid., p.184.

5. Ibid., p.263.

6. Ibid., pp.104, 186.

and 'ilm al-'arūd (metrics, prosody).⁽¹⁾

Of these sciences it was grammar that seems to have been relatively more popular than the others. The text-books mentioned were:

- Ibn Ājrūm, 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, al-Ājrūmiyya; ⁽²⁾ (a popular small book on grammar for beginners).
- Ibn Mālik, Al-fiiyyat Ibn Mālik, ⁽³⁾ (a book on grammar composed in 1,000 verses);
- al-Makki al-Nahwī (the grammarian), two commentaries:
 al-Sharh al-Kabīr 'ala al-Ājrūmiyya (his large commentary on al-Ājrūmiyya in 30 notebooks); ⁽⁴⁾
 al-Sharh al-Saghīr 'alā al-Ājrūmiyya (the smaller commentary in 10 notebooks). ⁽⁵⁾

f) 'ilm al-mantiq (logic)

Al-Tabaqāt makes references to some of the prominent 'ulamā' of the time who seem to have been interested in and teaching 'ilm al-mantiq to their desirous students. ⁽⁶⁾ No specific text-books, however, seem to have been mentioned. Hence, it could be assumed that the teachers dictated from memory or their own notebooks.

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.261-3, 263, and 291-2.

2. Ibid., p.103.

3. Ibid., p.190.

4. Ibid., pp.104-5.

5. Ibid., p.105.

6. Ibid., pp.349, 102-3, 260, 360, 291, 126, n.5.

C. Khalwa Teaching Aids:

The teaching and learning implements that have always been in use at the traditional khalwas are the following.

(a) Sand and earth floors

Almost every khalwa in the Sudan seems to have been
(1)
surrounded by a spacious enclosure or courtyard. Both the
surrounding space and the khalwa rooms have always been covered
(2)
with sand or earth.

Since the khalwa learners sit on the floor for study, they
always made extensive use of sand floors in teaching and learning
(3)
the alphabet and the elements of reading and writing. The
practice is still widely used by khalwas all over the country.

(b) The lawh (the wooden tablet)

Lawh is an old Muslim teaching and learning aid. It has
been referred to in the Qur'ān, (4) and used by the

1. Personal observations of the writer on his visits to the
khalwas, November - December, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. See "Teaching the *Qur'ān*, above.

4. Qur'ān, 85:22.

Companions.⁽¹⁾

In the Sudan it has been in use since the early 10th/16th century, when the sons of Jābir were children.⁽²⁾

It is usually a rectangular wooden tablet with a handle at the top and a small tail at the bottom with smooth polished sides. These lawhs were usually made out of ushar, hijlīj or harāz trees which were available in almost all regions of the Sudan or easily obtained.

Old established khalwas always seem to have had a stock of lawhs given to the khalwa Shaykh by individuals seeking God's reward and the Shaykh's baraka.⁽³⁾ Some of the ḥayrān would bring their own lawhs and leave them for the khalwa to use when they had finished their study.⁽⁴⁾ The young, new ḥuwār would be given a smaller and lighter lawh; when he progressed in study he would be issued with a larger one.

1. Mujāhid used to ask Ibn 'Abbās about the exegesis of the Qur'ān and used to have alwāh to write on (al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, vol.I, p.31).

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.47.

3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.

4. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, Umm Dawwan Bān, November, 1981.

(c) Al-Jīr (lime stone)

Each hūwār would be in possession of a piece of limestone to whiten the surfaces of the lawh with, when it had been washed off by clean water. The white surface was found to make the writing in ink by far more visible than writing on a non-white washed lawh. In addition, the dry white-washed lawh with lime stone was to facilitate writing with a pen and ink, by absorbing the ink and thus making the writing more distinct and visible.⁽¹⁾

On the other hand, writing on the limestone white-washed lawhs was said to have been easily washed off by water, leaving behind no trace on the smooth surface of the lawh itself.⁽²⁾

There has been no problem of supply of khalwa requirements of this material especially in regions with mountains or rocks rich in limestone, such as Jabel Um 'Alī in the Northern Province. At any rate, it is usually donated by individuals to the khalwas.⁽³⁾

(d) The Pen⁽⁴⁾

Khalwa pens were usually made of reeds, straw, dura cane, etc.

1. Information from ustādh 'Uthmān 'Abd al-Rahmān, khalīfa of the khalwa at al-Sūfī al-Azraq, November, 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, and from ustādh 'Alī, brother of the khalīfa at Kadabās, November, 1981.

4. Al-Qalam (the pen) has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, sūra 96, verse

all of which seem to have always been available in abundance in the Sudan agricultural environment.

The teeth of the pen were usually curved with great skill in order to make the right inclination which was said to have varied from about an angle of 45° to 30° .⁽¹⁾

The new hūwār would usually be taught by his instructor how to curve out the teeth of his pen and to have more than one in his possession when attending al-ramyā.⁽²⁾

(e) Al-dawāt (the ink-pot)

Like the lawh the ink-pot is an old writing aid that could be traced back to the early period of Islam, and in fact has been mentioned in the Qur'ān.⁽³⁾

The ink used by khalwas in the Sudan has been known as al-ʿamār. For centuries al-ʿamār has been made by the khalwa hayrān out of soot, gum Arabic and water.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Al-Tayyib, "The Changing Customs", op. cit., p.62
 2. The writer's observations at almost all of the khalwas he visited. For ramya, see below.
 3. The second chapter (of the Qur'ān) revealed, opens with the words "nūn wa al-qalam" (the ink-pot and the pen) (Qur'ān, 68:1); nūn means ink pot (al-Qalqashandī, Subh al-ʿAshā, II, 441/3.
 4. This has been a common practice in almost all khalwas - confirmed by all fakīs and hayrān, met.

The soot would be collected from underneath the cooking pots (resulting from the use of wood as a fuel), and gum Arabic would be made into powder. Then both would be mixed together in the ratio of about 70:30, and small lumps would be made out of the mixture.⁽¹⁾

The lumps would then be placed in small jars of, preferably clay, or glass and would be separated by layers of cows' or horses' tail hair; water would be added in a reasonable portion and the jar closed and left to mature; the layers of hair were said to help the mixture to precipitate and the ready 'am̄ār would then be tested for its richness.⁽²⁾

The hūwār would usually use the jar in which he had prepared al-'amar as an ink-bank from which he would take his daily requirement of 'amār in a smaller ink-pot or dawāt. Sometimes the lumps of mixture are preserved as undissolved balls of ink which would be mixed with water and made ready when needed.⁽³⁾

(f) Date stone

Date stones have been used by khalwa fakīs and their students

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1. Al-Tayyib, "The Changing Customs", p.62.
 2. Ibid.; confirmed by the writer's personal observations at the khalwas of Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādni, see above.
 3. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl, Umm Dawwan Bān.

for drawing parallel line with on the white-washed surfaces of the lawhs. In particular, they have been used by the fakīs (and their assistants) to write the alphabet (and words) on the lawhs of the new hayrān, in order to help them to trace on the date-stone writing, using the 'amār and pen.⁽¹⁾ Thus, they would learn by imitation and practice.

(g) Al-mihāya (the washing off of lawhs)

Every morning, usually before sunrise, the hayrān who had successfully recited their lawhs before the fakī - i.e., passed the 'arda the previous night - would be allowed to wash off their lawhs, in order to white-wash them in readiness for the new lesson.

The process of washing-off the lawhs has been known as al-mihāya.⁽²⁾ Indeed, the separate and untrodden spot on which those lawhs were washed off has also been called al-mihāya.⁽³⁾

The object on which al-mihāya was done was of different forms. At some khalwas such as that of Kutrānj and al-Sūfī al-Azraq⁽⁵⁾, it was a log of wood placed at a corner, at each of them.⁽⁶⁾ At the khalwa of al-Majādhīb of al-Damer, it

1. See the teaching of the alphabet, below.

2. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.

3. Common usage at almost all khalwas.

4. The writer's observations at the khalwas.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

was a large curved stone.⁽¹⁾ The washed-off water in all these cases would splash and dry off.

At some of the flourishing Sūfī khalwas, such as those of Kadabās, Abū Qūrūn and Umm Dawwan Bān, the lawhs were washed off in small basins with water, brought in buckets, by the learners in turn.⁽²⁾ Here the water washed off (also called al-mihāyā) would be collected in the small basins. Then the followers of the respective Sūfī Shaykhs would take from the collected mihāyā and splash it on themselves, or take it home as a sort of baraka.⁽³⁾

The justification for washing the lawhs at an untrodden spot was to preserve the mihāyā of the sacred scripture without dishonour.

Such a practice of the mihāyā seems to have been handed down intact from the time of the Companions⁽⁴⁾ and would be

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1. The writer's observations at the khalwas.
 2. Ibid.
 3. This has been a common practice especially at Sūfī khalwas such as those of Kadabās and Umm Dawwan Bān.
 4. Anas b. Mālik, the Companion of the Prophet, in a reply to a question about the practices of the tutors with the children (the learners) during the reigns of the Orthodox Caliphs - Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī - was reported to have said:
"The tutor used to have a jar where, every day, each boy would =

perpetuated.

(h) Al-katū, al-rūshān or al-saydāb

These three terms are synonymous and denote a broad shelf or a crude table-like surface supported by wooden legs, about a metre high, and placed at the corner of each khalwa room for the lawhs to be placed on (when not in use).⁽¹⁾ Again this was an act of respect to the Sacred Word copied on these lawhs.⁽²⁾

At some khalwas the katū was built in the form of a platform⁽³⁾, while at others the hayrān would pierce their lawhs into the straw-walls of the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

However, on the occasion of Sharāfa the decorated lawh would be hung high by a loop of string against the wall - a sign of distinction for the occasion.

= fetch some clean water and collect it in that jar in order to wash their lawhs. Then they would dig a hole in the ground where the used water would be poured into and thus left to dry up." (Ibn Saḥnūn/ al-Ahwānī, p.309).

1. The writer's observations at the khalwas visited.
2. Information from the khalwa Shaykh.
3. Kadabās and Wad al-Fādni.
4. Hamishkorayb khalwa was built of straw and reeds.

(1) Al-tuqqāba (the Qur'ān fire)

This is the wood-flame around which the fakī and the hayrān of the khalwa sat for teaching and learning. Till very recently almost all of the traditional khalwas depended almost entirely for light on the tuqqābas.

Today, however, most of the large khalwa centres that are in existence have been supplied by electricity or electric generators and have been using neon light instead.⁽¹⁾ Hence they have been enabled to make the practice of conducting study from early dawn and deep into the night much easier.

Today, the visitor would observe mounds of earth - indicating the spots of the traditional huge tuqqābas. Indeed, at Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān the tuqqāba is still retained as well as electric light, in case of the latter's failure.

However, the hundreds of khalwas in Western Sudan still rely on the tuqqābas as the only source of light.

1. Kadabās, al-Majādhīb, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī, Tayba, Wad al-Maqbūl, Hamishkorayb.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE KHALWA PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AND ACTIVITIES

It should be stated that the concept and practices of modern educational organization have never been known to the traditional khalwas in the Sudan. Hence it seems inconceivable to expect the programming of khalwa activities to be conducted on modern lines of school practices, for example, as in respect to division of course of study, according to term, weekly teacher's load or specific periods in terms of minutes.

In general, the established practice of the traditional khalwas, which seems to have been handed down from generation to generation, in respect to time dimension, seems to have been crystalized in the fact that the typical traditional khalwas have never had what is now known as the academic year. Instead, the khalwa would remain open for study, or related khalwa activities⁽¹⁾ throughout the year. The exception has been short holiday periods, on religious occasions such as the "'Īd al-fitr" at the end of Ramaḍān (the month of fasting) and for "'Īd al-adḥa" (feast of sacrifice) of about two weeks holiday each.⁽²⁾

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1. In Darfūr, in Western Sudan, except for the senior old students all the muhājirīn would abandon study and go on a three-day weekly tour round the villages collecting food and during the rainy season they would cultivate the fakī's farm.
 2. Information from khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn and Tayba.

Hence the traditional khalwas have continued admitting new students all the year round. This practice seems to have been feasible because of the individual system of instruction followed by the khalwa, as alluded to above.⁽¹⁾

The daily programme of activities, however, seems to have been closely linked with the times of the five daily prayers. In that the khalwa working day would start before dawn prayer (the first prayer of the day) and would end after the last daily prayer ('ishā'), and the duration in between would be geared to the rest of the prayer times - which are generally flexible. The following description gives further elaboration.

The Daily Programme :

The typical traditional khalwa day has always been an exceptionally extra-long day. It would start before dawn prayer (about three hours before sunrise) and would continue throughout the day, and even would go far into the night after 'ishā' prayer - up to about 10 p.m.⁽²⁾ However, there were little breaks, especially during prayer times, to modify the situation.

Below is a detailed description of the daily programmes of the established khalwas of Northern, Central and Eastern Sudan.⁽³⁾

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1. See Method of teaching the Qur'ān, above.
 2. This system applied to the main boarding khalwa in centres in Northern, Eastern and Central Sudan; the sun sets about 6 p.m.
 3. Khalwas such as Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādni, Tayba, Wad al-Maqbūl and Hamishkorayb, see above.

The first session started at about 3 a.m. and was called 'al-duqhshīyya al-kabīra' (the major dawn session). The fakī assistants of advanced hayrān would wake up the hayrān and rekindle the tuqqāba⁽¹⁾ or light the masīd.⁽²⁾

All the boarding hayrān would make wudū' (washing for prayer) and, assembling round the tuqqāba under the electric light, would embark on studying their lawhs for consolidation of memorization for those who had passed the 'arda' the night before,⁽³⁾ and in readiness for the dawn 'arda', for those who had failed to do so the night before - the muqayyims (the repeaters). The advanced hayrān would read from copies of the Qur'ān the portions of the Book they would copy, or write from memory, on their lawhs. The muqayyims would recite their lawhs to the fakī while junior hayrān recited their lawhs to their respective halqa Shaykhs - the assistants of the fakī.⁽⁴⁾

Then al-mu'adhdhin (caller for prayer) would call for subh (dawn) prayer which would be performed in jamā'a (group) led

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1. Wood fire around which learners gather to study by night; see khalwa teaching aids, above.
 2. Almost all of the main khalwa centres in North and Central Sudan - and at Hamishkorayb were provided (1981) with electricity; see these khalwa centres; masīd = masjid, here the reference is to all the khalwa complex.
 3. 'Arda' = recitation of the assignment of the Qur'ān; see description of 'arda', above.
 4. Such as those of Wad al-Fādnī, see above.

usually by the khalwa Sūfī Shaykh.⁽¹⁾

The subh prayer was usually succeeded by short du'ā' (prayers)⁽²⁾ dawn rātib,⁽³⁾ or tahlīl and du'ā' accompanied by a short session of maw'īza.⁽⁴⁾ This would end al-duqhshīyya al-kabīra.

Al-duqhshīyya al-saghīra (the short dawn session):

This session would start with al-mihāya when all those who have successfully memorized their lawhs would wash them off using clean water for al-mihāya (wiping off).⁽⁵⁾ Then they would make their lawhs white, using limestone, in order to make the writing clearly visible.⁽⁶⁾

Just about sunrise (around 6 a.m.) the hayrān would assemble in halqas around their respective instructors - the more advanced around the chief fakī and the less advanced and the junior learners around his assistants. The ramya session, as described

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1. The writer's observations at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn and Tayba.
 2. At Kadabās and Tayba.
 3. Rātib refers here to the regular function of prayers, repeated several times by the fakīs and their students believed to guard the khalwa complex from harm - as was experienced at Umm Dawwan Bān (the writer's visit).
 4. At Hamishkorayb, see the khalwas of 'Alī Bitāl, above.
 5. See "teaching aids" for al-mihāya, above.
 6. See "teaching aids" for al-jīr (limestone) above.

above,⁽¹⁾ would be conducted. It should be noted in this respect that the ramya has always been restricted to the bādi² (beginners) stage - i.e., those engaged in the first upward round of learning the Qur'ān. The main objective of this round, it should be added, is to give the hūwār both intensive and extensive training on reading, writing and, above all, to make him acquainted with the chapters and verses of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

At the beginning of the session, i.e., at sunrise, the young day learners would arrive to the khalwa. Each would start reading his lawh or practising writing on sand.⁽³⁾

When al-ramya was over, al-fakī and the hayrān would take a short tea break.⁽⁴⁾

The tea or, in fact, the coffee-break, at the khalwa of Hamishkorayb for men is usually longer - lasting from about 7 a.m. to about 9 a.m. - during which time the 'ilm session would take

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1. See "teaching aids" for the description of al-ramya.
 2. Y. al-Khalīfa and Khāṭir, p.6; information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl at Umm Dawwan Bān, and from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq at his khalwa - al-Sūfī al-Azraq.
 3. See below for instructing the beginners on the alphabet.
 4. This seems to have been a new development - khalwa learners in the past were not provided with tea. (Information from al-khalīfa al-Rayyāh at Wad al-Fādnī.)

place.⁽¹⁾

Then the siḥḥa (correction) of the lawḥs by the fakī for the advanced hayrān and by his assistants to the junior learners, would be conducted. Next would be the qaylūlah (mid-day nap and rest).⁽²⁾ This has been generally an established practice all over the khalwas. It usually starts from about 10 a.m. and may last up to the time of al-zuhr (mid-day) prayer around 1.30 p.m.⁽³⁾

During the qaylūlah break the hayrān would usually take their main day meal (breakfast or lunch) and take a badly needed nap - especially for the young boarding learners.⁽⁴⁾ The fakīs, too, would retire to their homes or private khalwas for rest.⁽⁵⁾

Then al-muʿadhdhin would call for the zuhr (afternoon) prayer about 1.30 p.m. The prayer would be attended by all as jamaʿa led by the fakī.⁽⁶⁾

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- still
1. Hamishkorayb is one of the very few khalwas that/teach ʿilm.
 2. It was said to have been a helpful rest and break from the extra long sessions, and during the hot mid-day.
 3. The writer's observations at Abū Qurūn, Wad al-Fādnī and Wad al-Maqbūl.
 4. Some of the young learners would be so tired that they would miss their meal, for they would immediately fall asleep (the writer's observations at Wad al-Maqbūl, for example).
 5. Information by al-fakī ʿAwad al-Karīm at Abū Qurūn.
 6. This has been a universal practice, to train the learners on the performance of ʿibādāt in practice.

Again, at some khalwas, like Hamishkorayb, the prayer was succeeded by a hadīth or tafsīr - as a maw'iza (preaching).

Al-zuhriyya (the afternoon session) which continues up to 'asr prayer (late afternoon) was devoted to individual reading and memorization from lawhs written in the morning.

During this period the advanced hayrān of the bādī³ stage, one by one would go to the fakī to read from their lawhs to make sure that they read the text correctly. The junior hayrān would read before their senior instructors.

At the same time the fakī would find time to check on the progress of the junior hayrān by himself.⁽¹⁾

Then al-mu'adhdhin's call for al-'asr prayer (late afternoon) the session ends at about 3 p.m. All the hayrān would attend the prayer, led by the fakī, as usual.

At Hamishkorayb the prayer was immediately succeeded by a maw'iza - a hadīth or tafsīr, attended by all.⁽²⁾

Al-'asriyya (late afternoon) session would then start and would last up to the maghrib prayer (first evening or sun-set prayer).

1. The writer's observations at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn and Umm Dawwan Bān.

2. See "Subjects and books", above. See Hamishkorayb, above.

During this session, individual reading and memorization of the daily assignment of the Qur'ān of each, continues. Some of the hayrān, normally the advanced, would read from copies of the Qur'ān the assignment of the following day, in order to commit it to memory and then copy it down on their slates by themselves or familiarise themselves with it in readiness for al-ramya.

Beginners would continue practising writing on sand under the supervision of their instructors.⁽¹⁾

Parallel with the Qur'ān reading session certain khalwas, such as Kadabās, al-Sūfī al-Azraq and Hamishkorayb, have been conducting a session of 'ilm for the senior hayrān.⁽²⁾

Al-'asriyya session ends with the call for al-maghrib prayer, about 5.30 p.m.

The maghrib prayer is succeeded at some of the khalwas by reading of rātib and normally⁽³⁾ by a maw'iza at Hamishkorayb.⁽⁴⁾

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1. The writer's observations at the khalwas.
 2. The writer's visit to these khalwas. For information on this aspect see these khalwas above.
 3. At Umm Dawwan Bān, see subh prayer at the same khalwa, above.
 4. The writer's observations at Hamishkorayb.

Immediately after prayer the very young learners would be dismissed. The rest of the hayrān would light the Qur'ān fire (the tuqqāba) and would sit around it and embark on their final revision of reading their daily assignments from their lawhs in readiness for the most serious session of the day - the 'arda (recitation).⁽¹⁾

The 'arda session would continue for about two hours - from after al-maghrib prayer (*early* evening's). As alluded to before, those who successfully recited their lessons would be allowed to wipe off or wash off their lawhs the following morning; others who did not would be muqayyims (repeaters) and would recite their lesson the following day during al-duqhshīyya al-kabīra.⁽²⁾

The fakī would then give the hayrān a break to take their evening meal and prepare for the 'ishā' (late evening) prayer.⁽³⁾

The hayrān led by the khalwa Shaykh or the fakī would perform the 'ishā' prayer in jamā'a (group). This was followed, on normal working days, by the last session of the day - al-sub' recitation - which seems to have been a general practice at the

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1. See description of al-'arda (recitation) below; see al-Tabaqāt, pp.284, 314 and 337 for reference to al-'arda (the recitation).
 2. See al-'arda, below.
 3. The writer's observations at the main khalwas.

majority of the main khalwas.⁽¹⁾

Al-sub' session

The idea - or the established tradition of the main khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan was to give the hayrān a systematic training on memorizing the whole of the Qur'ān spread over the days of the week. For this reason the Qur'ān is divided into seven equal portions - or seven asbā', sing. sub'.⁽²⁾

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1. Unlike the majority of the main khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan which used to devote the last session of the khalwa day to recitation of al-sub', some khalwas such as al-Sūfī al-Azraq (at al-Qadār²) used to conduct an 'ilm session which was also open for the public to attend and to forward their questions on fiqh problems (information from ustādh 'Uthmān al-Azraq); while at Hamishkorayb khalwa for men they would have the usual after-prayer session on hadīth or maw'iza (the writer's visit to the khalwa).
 2. The first sub' starts with al-fātiha (sūra 1) and ends with sūra 4, verse 86. The second sub' starts with verse 87, sūra 4, and ends with verse 170, sūra 7. The third sub' starts with verse 171, sūra 7, and ends with verse 27, sūra 14. The fourth sub' starts with verse 28, sūra 14 and ends with verse 74, sūra 23. The fifth sub' starts with verse 75, sūra 23, and ends with verse 23, sūra 34. The sixth sub' starts with verse 24 sūra 34, and ends with verse 18, sūra 49. The seventh sub' starts with sūra 50 and ends with sūra 114 (al-Bīlī, pp.10-11.)

Almost all the main khalwas of North and Central Sudan used to devote the last session of the day for al-sub'⁽¹⁾ (one-seventh) recitation. All the hayrān would walk around the Qur'ān fire, the tuqqāba, and each would be instructed to recite a sub' (one-seventh) of the Qur'ān, or as much as he could if he had learnt less than that.⁽²⁾

The aim behind that daily exercise was to consolidate the memorization of the portions of the Qur'ān he had already recited at the 'arda; such a practice seems to have been backed by a hadīth:

The Prophet was reported by Ibn 'Umar to have said, "The Qur'ān is like the hobbled camels, if their owner constantly observes that they are hobbled he will keep them, if he does not, he will lose them. Likewise, if the possessor of the Qur'ān reads it day and night he will retain it, if he does not, he will forget it".⁽³⁾

At Hamishkorayb, in Eastern Sudan, as alluded to before, there are separate populous khalwas for women.⁽⁴⁾ Since women

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1. The writer has witnessed this tradition at Abū Qurūn, Tayba and Umm Dawwan Bān when he visited these khalwas.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Al-Qābisī, al-Ahwānī, p.245.
 4. See the women's khalwa at Hamishkorayb, above.

had to reconcile their home duties and looking after their children on the one hand with pursuing their study on the other, they have been following a flexible daily programme.⁽¹⁾

At dawn they would go to the khalwa to attend al-subh prayer under the leadership of a shaykha - imāma (leader in prayer).⁽²⁾ Then, like the khalwa men of Hamishkorayb they would chant tahlīl and then embark on reading prayers - certain sūras and/or verses of the Qur'ān - for protection against evil.

Then they would embark on the study of their lawhs for reading and memorization in a similar way to the men. This was usually followed by a short session of 'ilm - fiqh, sīra, tafsīr or hadīth.⁽³⁾ This was followed by about two hours' break - up to about 9 a.m.

They would come back to the khalwa for an hour's mid-morning session - devoted for reading and memorization of their assignments, after which they would return to their homes.⁽⁴⁾

At zuhr prayer's time they would come to the khalwa, attend jamā'a prayer.⁽⁵⁾ Then they would resume memorization of the

1. Information from al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr, who was in charge of the women khalwas at Hamishkorayb.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Qur'ān from their lawhs. This would be followed by an 'ilm session dealing with a different subject or topic from that of the morning's session.⁽¹⁾ The session would end with al-'asr prayer which they perform in jamā'a (group). Between al-'asr prayer and al-maghrib prayer, i.e., till sunset, they would enter into a long break in order to prepare the evening meal for their families. Then they would convene again for al-maghrib prayer which they would perform in jamā'a, also.⁽²⁾

The last session of the women's khalwa day was the one conducted between the maghrib and 'ishā' prayers (early and late evening prayers), during which time they would revise from their lawhs the lessons of the day, and above all make their 'arda (recitation of the Qur'ān) for those concerned, while for others it would devote it to the consolidation of 'ilm lessons of the day.⁽³⁾ Generally, whether in learning or teaching, women khalwas were said to have been following the same methods applied at men khalwas.⁽⁴⁾

The extra-long working day of the khalwa, however, which seems to have been the general trend in most parts of the country seems to have been confirmed by Shuqayr when he described the khalwa

1. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

day as follows:

"Khalwa study for the people of the Sudan starts in the last third of the night, and hence the pupils study sitting round the wood fire; they continue to study till late in the morning, when they would retire to their homes for lunch."⁽¹⁾

"Then they return to the khalwa at al-zuhr (the afternoon) and continue studying till after the 'asr' (late afternoon) when they would go to their homes for supper."⁽²⁾

"Then they would come back to the khalwa to study around the wood-fire, till the 'ishā' (late evening) prayer."⁽³⁾

"Afterwards they would sleep till the last third of the night, when they would rise up to resume their study..."⁽⁴⁾

In fact, this practice could be traced back to, and perhaps better illustrated by, the practice of al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd (d.1127/1715)⁽⁵⁾ - a practice which he seems to have inherited, through his uncles, from his grandfather 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Hamadtū.⁽⁶⁾

1. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141— describing the 19th century practices.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Al-Tabaqāt, p.285.

6. Ibid, p.282.

According to al-Tabaqāt, al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd was reported by his pupil Muhammad b. al-Rayda al-'Awadī, ⁽¹⁾ to have been conducting his daily programme of studies at his khalwa, according to the following practice:

"Long before dawn, he would be awake, and one of the advanced students carrying a bundle of wood, would enter to his Shaykh to rekindle the wood-fire. Then, while al-faqīh was offering tanafful (prayer), his pupil would study by himself..."⁽²⁾

"Then with whip in hand he would wake up the fuqarā of both 'ilm, and the Qur'ān, in order to wash off their lawhs [which had been successfully recited the night before] and to write the new lessons. Meanwhile he would be performing his prayers - telling his 1000-tiny beads rosary."⁽³⁾

"When the fuqara finished writing their lawhs [from memory] he would start doing the sihha (the correction) for the Qur'ān students only, till he was called by al-mu'adhdhin for al-subh (dawn) prayer."⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.283.

2. Ibid., p.284.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

"Then he would enter to read the last days lesson on khalīl.⁽¹⁾

"When he had finished that he would enter to the fuqara of the Qur'ān to finish the correction of their lawhs."⁽²⁾

"Next he would read the taftīha (introductory first morning lesson) on khalīl. Then there would come to him the fuqarā' reading al-Kharāzī, al-Jazarī and al-Shātībīyya. Next, there would come to him those studying al-'Aqā'id, al-Akhdarī and al-'Ashmāwī."⁽³⁾

"Then al-mu'adhdhin would call him for the zuhr prayer. When the prayer was over he gave the afternoon lesson on khalīl."⁽⁴⁾

"Then he would perform al-'asr prayer. Next, there would come to him those studying tajwīd; and next there would come those reading al-'Aqā'id, al-'Ashmāwī and al-Akhdarī till al-mu'adhdhin called for al-maghrib prayer."⁽⁵⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.283.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp.283-4.

5. Ibid., p.284.

"Then he would recite al-maghrib lesson on Khalīl - the text - from memory, making a commentary on each verse equivalent to a maqra' of the Qur'ān, in length." (1)

"Next, sitting on an 'anqarayb (bed) he would listen to the Qur'ān students making their 'arda (recitation), two at a time." (2)

"Then he would perform al-'ishā' prayer, and would rest for a while till the fuqara had their supper." (3)

"Next, sitting upright, with whip in hand he would hear those who had learnt the Qur'ān by heart, recite their daily sub' of the Qur'ān." (4)

"When that was finished, he would retire to his khalwa." (5)
[and thus ends the khalwa day] .

"During the resting days [week ends] he would give legal advice, conduct judgement and write amulets...That was his pattern of life till he abandoned this world. His death was caused by his long sitting for teaching the fuqarā'

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.284.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

till his back was broken⁽¹⁾...He died in 1127/1715..."⁽²⁾

In Western Sudan, especially in Dārfūr, there seems to have been no similar serious programme of study as that of Northern and Central Sudan, described above. The khalwas there seem to have been following rather flexible programmes of daily activities that would reconcile their work and study. Hence, almost all of the khalwas, of Dārfūr, for example, have been conducted on a part-time basis instead of being run on a full-time basis.⁽³⁾

Before the introduction of the modern school in Darfur, village khalwas were said to have been conducting two sessions a day - an early morning session and an evening session - while during the day, khalwa learners would join their parents working in the fields or looking after cattle.⁽⁴⁾

This point seems to have been confirmed by al-Tūnusī who stayed in Dārfūr between 1218/1803 - 1225/1810. In Darfur,

"the learning of the Qur'ān is very SLOW for the learners do not study except by night at the makātib (sing. maktab). During the day the boy is engaged in looking after his animals, goats or cattle; and when he

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.284.

2. Ibid., p.285.

3. The reference is to the small village khalwas and to the muhājirīn khalwas, too; see the example of both, above.

4. Information from al-Shaykh Ismā'īl 'Abd al-Mājid, al-Fashir, December, 1981.

returns in the evening he takes his lawh and goes to the maktab. Each day, every lad, by turn, brings firewood in order to make fire by the light of which they write and study for memorization. Their [standard] of memorization, however, is not good, hence there is rarely one who has learnt the Qur'ān very well. As for the study of al-'ulūm (sing. ʿilm) (the sciences) it was very backward too for the lack of 'ulamā'..."⁽¹⁾

The same practice seems to have been perpetuated up to the present time. For example, under National rule, when primary schools found their way to the villages, children in these villages used to attend the khalwa very early in the mornings and during the evenings only.⁽²⁾ During the day, however, they would either join the primary school (for children of the more enlightened parents) or work with their parents in the field or were engaged in looking after the family's animals - cattle or sheep.⁽³⁾

The practice of running the khalwa on a part-time basis seems to have been clearly demonstrated also by the muhājirīn khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Al-Tūnūsī, Muḥammad b. 'Umar, Tashhīdh al-Adh'hān, pp.280-81.
 2. Information from al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Majīd Ismā'īl, December, 1981. The writer's visit to the khalwa of al-Ni'ma, Ṭawīla District, see above.
 3. Information from al-fakī 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Harūn, Ṭawīla, 9th December, 1981.
 4. See the muhājirīn khalwa camp of Nāmī, above.

The Khalwa Weekly Programme of Activities

In order to break the monotony of serious study, during the extra long working khalwa day,⁽¹⁾ it seems, the typical traditional khalwas were reported to have had extra curricula activities which would modify the daily programmes, outlined above.⁽²⁾

Saturday was the beginning of the khalwa week of activities. The learners would be expected to come fresh, after the week-end, and the daily programme of study would be conducted on the lines described above.

Sunday and Thursday evenings at the active Sūfī khalwas were usually devoted to communal Sūfī dhikr rituals.⁽³⁾ The evening session would terminate earlier than usual so as to allow for preparation for the weekly occasion.⁽⁴⁾

The courtyard would be cleansed by the hayrān and Sūfī followers and heaps of firewood would be collected for the tuqqāba.⁽⁵⁾ The Sūfī followers would usually attend the last

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1. See the daily programme of the khalwa, above.
 2. Most of the traditional extra-curricula activities have disappeared.
 3. Reference is made at present to such khalwas as those of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba.
 4. Usually the Sūfī dhikr started ^{after} 'ishā' prayer.
 5. Now almost all of the main Sūfī khalwas are provided with electricity.

evening prayer (the 'ishā) with their Shaykh and then embark on their rituals. These would take the form of the chanting of prayers, dances to the beats of the nawba (the drums) around the tuqqāba, or the flag of their sect, and extraneous group rhythmical movements accompanied by vocalizing the names of God, such as "Allāh, Allāh" or "Hay Qayyūm", and so on.⁽¹⁾

The old hayrān were usually allowed by the khalwa Shaykh to participate in such rituals, while the young could enjoy attending the occasion if they could afford to stay awake deep into the night.

Monday was a normal study day. Tuesday was the faz'a day (the day for collecting the firewood). The weekly gathering of firewood was called faz'a.⁽²⁾ It was an occasion of outing - the hayrān would usually make the actual collection of wood last

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1. Information from most of khalwa fakīs and personal observations at the khalwas of Tayba, Abū Qurūn and Umm Dawwan Bān.
 2. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.141. According to 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib, the word was derived from the Arabic root faz'a which devoted communal gathering in face of danger (al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59). This students' task has now disappeared from the main khalwas of Northern and Central Sudan. However, in Western Sudan (in Dārūr) where wood was available it was practised on an individual basis, see below.

of all, spending a good portion of the time playing, chasing rabbits, swimming or quarrelling amongst themselves.⁽¹⁾

As a protective measure on such an occasion, the fakī would give his strict instructions to the group leaders that the young hayrān should not enter water, lest they would drown, if they were collecting wood carried down by the stream, from the river - and he would even mark the feet of the young hayrān with charcoal.⁽²⁾

In Western Sudan, where firewood was more available than in Northern Sudan, for example, each huwār would fetch a bundle or a log of wood from his home if he was living with his family.⁽³⁾

Wednesday late afternoon was the occasion of "karāmat al-arbi'a", Wednesday offering . Every Wednesday afternoon, after the 'asr prayer, khalwa boys usually headed by a huwār who had just had his sharāfa⁽⁴⁾, during the bādi' stage⁽⁵⁾ went out

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1. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.
 2. Information supplied by the fakīs of Kadabās, al-Ghubush and by al-Ḥāqar at al-Damer; of course such a precaution would apply only to khalwas near the river.
 3. Information from al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl, al-Fāshir.
 4. Sharāfa (honouring) refers to decoration of the huwār lawh when reaching a certain level in his learning progress, i.e., it denotes his promotion (see above for more information).
 5. Bādi' stage refers to the first beginners round of reading the Qur'ān.

in small groups of three or four hayrān to "beg" the housewives for offering of karāma of grain or beans.⁽¹⁾ Whatever they gathered would be collected together in a large pot and then boiled. The cooked grain and beans were called balīla. All the hayrān and their fakī would share in eating the Wednesday karāma or balīla and each would even take a little of it to his family as an act of blessings.⁽²⁾ The remainder of the collected grain or money would go to the fakī's household.⁽³⁾

It should be added here that usually the collection of dura (grain) and beans by the hayrān was done on Wednesday which was usually the sharāfa day. It could be assumed then, that the origin of the muhājirīn widespread practice of daily "begging" of food and their three-day tour around the villages to collect grain or beans, in Dārfūr in Western Sudan, (in which also the sharāfa occasion was exploited) seems to have been based on, and transferred long ago, from this Wednesday karāma occasion practised by khalwa hayrān in Northern Sudan - see the muhājirīn khalwa, above.

Wednesday evening was devoted at many of the traditional khalwas to a weekly memorization game known as al-murāmā derived

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1. Karāma here means an offering which would bring blessings to the donor (al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.63).
 2. Shuqayr, p.141.
 3. Al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.59.

derived from al-ramya.⁽¹⁾

Every Wednesday evening after the 'ishā prayer the hayrān would assemble and the senior students would arrange themselves into two camps. Each camp would select a representative and both would face each other in the middle of the ḥalqa. Then one of them would start testing the ability of the other in respect to memorization of different verses of the Qur'ān - similar to the ramya situation, as described above. For example, one would ask the other to mention the verse that contained ten consecutive grammatical signs of fathāt, or to name the sūras in which a certain verse was repeated, or to complete a certain verse from a clue as in the ramya position - and in each case if the challenged ḥuwār failed to respond or made a mistake, all the audience would shout together the word arqūd (lie down) indicating that he was defeated and another one would come up to the challenger. In the end the team with less mistakes would be hailed as the winner of the night.⁽²⁾

Thursday morning was devoted to the cleansing of the khalwa premises by all the khalwa students.

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1. See the procedure for al-ramya, above. The information about this occasion was supplied by ustādh Uthmān 'Abd al-Rahmān, khalīfa of al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq. See also Badrī, Bābikir, Tārīkh Hayātī, vol.II, pp.167-8.
 2. Information from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl at Umm Dawwan Bān.

In the afternoon, the week end started. Thursday night, however, was one of the twice weekly communal dhikr occasions at the active Sūfī khalwas.⁽¹⁾ On Thursday, which was the beginning of the weekly holiday - more people would attend the nawba dhikr, followers and students permanently living at the khalwa.

Friday was universally taken as the weekly holiday by all the khalwas.

Usually the Sūfī followers of the khalwa Shaykh come to the qubba of the founder and to the khalīfa for visitations seeking the baraka of the Shaykh and would be provided with amulets to take home for themselves and sick relatives while the Shaykh would earn some financial revenue.⁽²⁾

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1. The Sūfī dhikr was held twice a week: on Sunday and Thursday nights - after al-sub' sessions. (Information from the khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn and Tayba.)
 2. Information from the khalwa fakīs at Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān and Tayba. (The writer's visits to these khalwas.) See financial aspect of khalwa education, below.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCIPLINE AT THE KHALWA

One of the main characteristics of khalwa education was the high degree of discipline effectively enforced and maintained by the fakī amongst the often large khalwa student population. This phenomenon seems to be indicated by the established practice of kissing the hand of the Shaykh, or the fakī, and walking bare-footed in his presence - as signs of respect;⁽¹⁾ there was complete submission of the learners to the authority of the fakī - and hence the absence of any sort of protest, strike or revolt to undermine that authority.⁽²⁾ The fakī's absolute authority amongst his students at the khalwa seems to have been a reflection of his spiritual influence amongst all sectors of the society - rulers and lay - out of desire for his baraka, or of fear of his wrath, as alluded to above.⁽³⁾

1. These established practices in the Sudan have been always observed at the Sūfī khalwa centres but not at the khalwas of Dār Fūr, for example, whether those of al-muhājirīn or the small village khalwas (the writer's visits and observations).
2. This seems to constitute a contrast to the behaviour of school students which was often characterized by revolt and opposition and manifested in strikes and marches of protest (the writer's experience, his own schooldays in the Sudan).
3. See the Teachers Status, especially during the Funj era, above.

Nevertheless, like Muslim teachers of all times, the khalwa fakīs have also resorted to corporal punishment as an effective means of enforcing discipline and inducing negligent pupils to double their efforts for learning.⁽¹⁾

However, the punishment of the child was supposed to be carried out for disciplinary reasons, and at the minimum level.

Abu 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Hanbalī was reported to have narrated a hadīth by the Prophet that read: "The discipline of the child was three lashes, any excess over that would be accounted for on Doomsday".⁽²⁾

Nevertheless, according to Sahnūn, the teacher could exceed the three lashes limit when disciplining a child for such offences as engaging in play, absenting himself from study or causing harm to others; but for not learning the Qur'ān the punishment was to be restricted to the three lashes.⁽³⁾

As a Muslim practice, it was not only the children of the common people who were exposed to corporal punishment, but even the young princes were beaten up by their teachers for the sake of discipline.

1. See below.

2. Quoted by Sahnūn / al Ahwānī, p.310.

3. Ibid.

Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī, the tutor of al-Mamūn was reported to have one day beaten the young prince nine lashes for staying away from his study.⁽¹⁾

Although Ibn Khaldūn seems to have criticized the harsh treatment towards learners, yet he seems to have approved of the advice of Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd to al-Aḥmar - the tutor of his son al-Amīn - in respect to the discipline of his son "Try your utmost to reform him through lenient treatment... but if he did not respond, resort to severity and harshness".⁽²⁾

However, the most detailed treatment on discipline of learners seems to have been written by the Mālikite faqīh al-Qābisī (d.403/1012).⁽³⁾

According to al-Qābisī, if the learner had to be punished the teacher should see to it that it did not exceed three lashes; and that such a punishment should be carried out for defective learning, as outlined below.

a) for negligence; b) failure to respond quickly to the teacher; c) failure to memorize on time; d) making many mistakes in reading the assigned portion or writing his

1. Al-Bayhaqī, al-Maḥāsin wa al-Masāwī, pp.629-630.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddima, vol.III, p.307.

3. Al-Ahwānī, A.F., al-Tarbiya fī al-Islām, p.48.

lawh as exemplified in missing letters, or mis-spelling or untidy form.⁽¹⁾

But before resorting to physical punishment the teacher should apply milder forms of punishment, such as:⁽²⁾

- a) warning time and again;
- b) suspension for a while;
- c) reprimanding - but to avoid using insulting language.

As a disciplinary measure for offences other than those concerned with learning, al-Qābisī would recommend corporal punishment ranging from three to ten lashes but in this case the child's guardian had to be consulted for approval, if the child could bear the punishment. The cases which would justify such a punishment were enumerated by al-Qābisī as the following:⁽³⁾

- a) causing harm to others;
- b) engaging in play;
- c) running away from the 'kuttāb';
- d) staying away beyond the holiday (without an excuse).

In addition to the above mentioned punishment, al-Qābisī pointed out that there might be at the kuttāb some unruly

1. Al-Qābisī/al-Ahwānī, p.270.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

adolescents who would not heed the ten lashes punishment; in such a case the offender should be punished beyond the recommended ten lashes, if he could bear that.⁽¹⁾

Al-Qābisī, also, seems to have stated the following conditions to the teacher, as to how he would execute the punishment:⁽²⁾

- a) The punishment should be painful, but not to exceed that and become harmful.
- b) The teacher should carry out the punishment by himself and - as Sahnūn had rightly recommended - he should not authorise the youths to discipline each other lest that might lead to dispute amongst them. However, if the teacher did not share such a view, he could delegate his authority for discipline to one of the students, if he had an excuse.
- c) The teacher should avoid beating the child's head or face, for it was safer to beat on the soles of the feet.⁽³⁾
- d) The teacher should be kind to the child and not prevent him from going to take his meal or take water, but could urge him to come back quickly.⁽⁴⁾

Another important condition was that the teacher should not

1. Al-Qābisī/ al-Ahwānī, p.270.

2. Ibid., p.271.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

physically punish the child before the age of ten. This was reported to have been based on the hadīth that was transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and al-Ḥākim and which reads: "Order your children to perform prayer at the age of seven, but beat them [if they do not respond] at the age of ten."⁽¹⁾

This is a clear indication that the physical punishment was only to be used as a last resort, and in this case it was to be preceded by three years of inducement and parental guidance.

In the Sudan, the khalwa teachers - the fakīs - with whom we are more concerned in this study, have also practised corporal punishment. The practice could be traced back to the 11th/17th century.

According to al-Tabaqāt, Muḥammad b. al-Shaykh ‘Abdallāh al-Turayfī, as a child, was reported to have been studying the Qur’ān under Gharbāwī who used to beat him severely and hence he complained to al-Shaykh Dafa‘allāh al-‘Arakī (d.1094/1683).⁽²⁾

The phenomenon of corporal punishment at the khalwas seems to have also been evidenced by the practice of al-faqīh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd (d.1127/1715) who, as indicated above, used to take his whip at the early dawn and wake up the fuqarā’ for the new day

1. ‘Alwān, Tarbiyat al Awlād, p.766; al-Qābisi/ al Ahwānī, p.262.

2. Al-Tabaqāt, p.337.

study, and also by his practice of sitting on his bed, with whip in hand, to hear the fuqarā' reciting the 'arda.⁽¹⁾

Another indication of the extensive application of physical punishment was the reference to al-fakī Dafa'allāh Muḥammad al-Kāhlī (d.1121/1710)⁽²⁾ who was reported to have been so lenient to his students that he had neither showed harsh treatment to the students of the Qur'ān nor had he beaten them falaqa⁽³⁾ (on the soles of their feet), as was the common practice of the Qur'ān teachers,⁽⁴⁾ but he used to order them, or dissuade them, by means of kind and tender speech.⁽⁵⁾

That common practice of corporal punishment at the khalwa during the Funj period was also referred to by 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib who stated that "The discipline of the khalwa was harsh, bastinado and hitting with firewood at random were among the commonest of the khalwa disciplinary measures."⁽⁶⁾

Not only that, but the attitude of the public towards such harsh punishment seems to have been of full support and even of encouragement. This is evidenced by the saying that when a hūwār

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.284.

2. Ibid., p.213.

3. See below for more information on al-falaqa.

4. Al-Tabaqāt, p.212.

5. Ibid.

6. Al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.60.

was presented to the fakī of the khalwa for the first time his family would say: "To us belong the bone and to you the flesh".⁽¹⁾ Thus indicating that the fakī was delegated full authority to "beat, flog, and chastise the boy as much as he thought fit to do."⁽²⁾

To assess the harshness of the punishment inflicted upon the learners by their teachers it seems relevant to describe the different forms of punishment that were in common use, as has been confirmed by almost all of the khalwa fakīs met by the writer,⁽³⁾ and which were exemplified in the following:

a) Use of the whip and the stick at random to urge or punish the negligent learners of the Qur'ān. The fakī or his assistants would pass around the ḥalqas of ḥayrān at any time of the day - but especially at the time just before al-‘arḍa⁽⁴⁾ - lashing the boys on their heads, backs or limbs urging them to read aloud from their lawḥs, their daily assignments of the Qur'ān.

1. Al-Tayyib, "Changing Customs", p.60.

2. Ibid.

3. Of these reference could be made to the khalwa fakīs of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba, Wad al-Maqbūl and Muḥammad Nūr ‘Īsā of al-Fāshir.

4. Recitation session before the fakī; see "Methods of teaching and learning" for more information.

b) The falaqa or Umm Sa'dallāh'

The falaqa or Umm Sa'dallāh was a piece of wood about two feet in length with a hole at each end,⁽¹⁾ and a piece of thin rope that went through the holes, whereby at the instruction of the fakī both feet of the offender would be fastened to the piece of the wood, which would be twisted round and round to make the grip both tighter and painful.⁽²⁾ Then two strong boys would be holding each end of the piece of wood and raise the offender's feet high while the fakī would be flinging his arm, with whip or stick in hand, flogging the boy on the soles of his feet.⁽³⁾ There was no limit to the number of the fakī's severe blows which could be continued till the stick was broken, or the fakī satisfied, and the boy's voice lost screaming.⁽⁴⁾ It should be added, here, that this type of punishment is no longer practised.⁽⁵⁾

c) al-mikkīyya⁽⁶⁾

This was another horrible device which used to be employed

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1. Often the piece of wood had no holes, but the rope was tied to it at both ends (al-fakī Ahmad Wad al-Maqbūl,
 2. Information from al-fakī Ahmad b. al-Maqbūl, at Wad al-Maqbūl, 15th December, 1981.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Confirmed by the khalwa fakīs of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān.
 6. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.191.

by the khalwas to discipline their hayrān. Al-mikkīyya was a sort of iron bar, about one foot in length, or a short chain connected to a ring on each end; the rings were used to put around the offender's lower legs and locked - thus making the movement of the hūwār extremely difficult; or a chain for the feet.

Al-mikkīyya was usually used to keep in chain the huwār, who had attempted to run away from the khalwa.⁽¹⁾ Because of the harshness of this device and perhaps owing to its negative psychological effect among the learners who would resent it as a symbol of compulsion against one's will, and indeed a sort of harsh imprisonment, the fakīs usually consulted the parents before using it.⁽²⁾

The parents on their part did not only approve of it, but in many cases were reported to have brought the device themselves and put it around their children's legs.⁽³⁾ Their main justification was that they were doing so for the good of their sons - to discipline them and induce them to learn the Qur'ān.⁽⁴⁾

1. Information by al-fakī Ahmad Wad al-Maqbūl at his khalwa, 15th December 1981.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. According to al-fakī Ahmad Wad al-Maqbūl those whose parents approved of al-mikkīyya were the ones who were too difficult to be handled at home.

For this reason, the offender would be detained in a mikkiyya until he changed his attitude and the fakī became convinced that he would not attempt to run away from the khalwa. Sometimes the offender would remain in al-mikkiyya till he completely learnt the Qur'ān by heart, i.e., for about three years.⁽¹⁾

d) Dismissal

Older learners who joined the khalwas on their own accord and who, for one reason or other, might not comply with the practices of the khalwa fakī would be - if all advice failed - told to leave the khalwa.⁽²⁾

Nevertheless, despite the severity of the disciplinary measures the traditional khalwas used to employ against their hayrān, the society at large seems to have been in support of them as necessary means for good education and better behaviour.⁽³⁾

This view seems to have been shared by 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib, according to whom such a "system was not entirely devoid of sound educational policy".⁽⁴⁾ He went on to emphasize that "the

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1. Information from al-fakī Ahmad wad al-Maqbūl.
 2. Information from the khalwa fakīs at Wad al-Fādī, Ṭayba and Wad al-Maqbūl.
 3. Information from ustādh 'Alī, brother of the khalwa khalīfa at Kadabās, November 1981, and from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Damer, November, 1981.
 4. Al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.60.

harshness itself was part and parcel of the ferocity of the environment at large,"⁽¹⁾ and that "the training of the khalwa hūwārs fitted them better for survival than those who had no training at the khalwa at all."⁽²⁾

Today, the traditional disciplinary khalwa practices have, in general, become much modified. However, there seem to be some regional differences in this respect.

In Northern and Central Sudan, where the modern school has overshadowed the khalwas which, paradoxically, have also been revived in forms of big centres,⁽³⁾ the more severe forms of corporal punishment seem to have disappeared. The common form of physical punishment is the whip or even al-fartawq - which is a sort of long belt tied to a short stick and used to cause a loud sound when beaten in the air, and meant to merely frighten the young negligent learners.⁽⁴⁾

The reason behind this development could be attributed to

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1. Al-Ṭayyib, "Changing Customs", p.60.
 2. Ibid.
 3. In these regions parents have practically switched their children to the modern schools - the khalwa centres in reference are those of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī, Ṭayba - see these khalwa centres, above.
 4. This sort of whip was used at the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān (the writer's visit to the khalwa, December, 1981).

the change of attitudes of the relatively few parents who still send their sons to the khalwas in these regions, towards the value of the traditional khalwa corporal punishment on the one hand, the need of the khalwa fakīs to induce learners from outside their regions to their recently revived khalwas and the mutual need of the learners (the muhājirīn) to avail themselves of relatively comfortable means of living and good educational opportunities, on the other. It should be added that in Western Sudan and especially at al-muhājirīn camps, the khalwa fakī did not use physical punishment against these muhājirīn.⁽¹⁾ However, the smooth running of these khalwas with the minimum use of physical punishment at most of the main khalwa centres in these regions.⁽²⁾

The exception, however, seems to have been exemplified in the khalwa of Wad al-Maqbūl.⁽³⁾ Unlike almost all of the existing traditional khalwa centres of the region, Wad al-Maqbūl was a non-Ṣūfī dependent khalwa. Hence it has remained an isolated separate camp of khalwas with no village of followers and without moral and financial support of Ṣūfī followers.

Hence the khalwa fakī and his students continued to exist

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1. See the muhājirīn khalwa at Nāmī, Ṭawīla District, Dār-Ḥur, above.
 2. The khalwa centres referred to were those of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Ḍawwan Bān, Wad al-Ḥadnī, Ṭayba.
 3. The khalwa of Wad al-Maqbūl started originally at al-Duwaynib village in 1944; 18 years later it was moved across the river to its present site, south of Rufa'a (from al-fakī al-Maqbūl).

on the meagre resources available.

Drinking water was drawn out manually by buckets from a traditional well.⁽¹⁾ And, until very recently, the traditional tuqqāba⁽²⁾ was the only source of light.⁽³⁾

In general, life at Wad al-Maqbūl ran on traditional lines whether in living or in facilities or methods of learning. In fact the seventy-year old founder and Shaykh of the khalwa - al-fakī Ahmad b. al-Maqbūl - who did not practice any Ṣūfī rituals remained all his life an extremely traditional fakī who seems to have been reliving and recreating his own past experiences.⁽⁴⁾ Indeed he confirmed to the writer that he was following almost the same practices and methods of learning he had experienced, as a young learner, at the khalwa of Wad Abū Ṣālih, sixty years before.⁽⁵⁾

As far as discipline was concerned, the khalwa of al-fakī

1. The writer's visit to the khalwa, 15th December, 1981.
2. Ibid.; for the description of tuqqāba, see "Teaching Aids".
3. The writer was informed by al-fakī Ahmad wad al-Maqbūl that an electric generator was donated to the khalwa in September, 1981.
4. Interview with al-fakī Ahmad Wad al-Maqbūl at his khalwa, 15th December, 1981.
5. Ibid.

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Ahmad b. al-Maqbūl was well known for its extreme disciplinary measures.⁽¹⁾ Hence, parents seem to have been sending their delinquent and unruly children to be reformed under the khalwa's severe discipline and at the same time to learn the Qur'ān and become religious persons.

The writer was informed by al-fakī Ahmad b. al-Maqbūl that he would apply severe flogging against any young learner (adolescents included) if he committed any offence such as failure to carry out his learning duties, quarrelling with one another or even be seen playing or running about.⁽²⁾

However, because of the harsh discipline, the strictness of study, the lack of adequate living facilities and the dryness of that khalwa life, as exemplified in absence of celebrations, Sūfī rituals, and holidays; and above all the lack of any sense of spiritual loyalty towards al-fakī, the adolescent learners often tried to run away from that khalwa "camp".

Unfortunately, when they were caught or brought back by

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1. It posed a contrast in this respect to all other khalwas visited.
 2. Interview with al-fakī Ahmad b. al-Maqbūl at his khalwa on 15th December, 1981. The writer was informed that the offender would be beaten up till the stick broke into pieces and the learner fell twisting and screaming.

their parents, they were put in chains - in the mikkīyya ⁽¹⁾. The writer on his visit to the khalwa was horrified to learn that the mikkīyya was being extensively used at that khalwa and that according to the khalwa faki fifty students out of about two hundred hayrān, or 25% of the students at the time, were put in al-mikkīyya ⁽²⁾. Not only that but, walking around the khalwa courtyard, the writer found fourteen of those who had been put in al-mikkīyya were all chained together round an unshady tree and left lying under the mid-day sun. ⁽³⁾

When asked about their crime they told the writer they had made recurrent attempts to run away for freedom from the khalwa camp and had they succeeded they would not even return to their homes, let alone to the khalwa, or in their words "that dreadful prison". ⁽⁴⁾

In Western Sudan, at the village khalwas, corporal punishment seems to have been a common practice. The faki would use the stick and the whip in addition to the threatening by shouting at the young learners in order to maintain discipline or to urge

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1. See description, above.
 2. Interview with the faki Ahmad b. al-Maqbūl, 15/12/1981.
 3. The writer's visit to the khalwa on 15/12/81. The writer has recorded the names of those boys.
 4. The writer's visit to the khalwa of Wad al-Maqbūl, 15th December 1981.

a pupil to learn his lawh.⁽¹⁾

At the main muhājirīn centres, such as that of Nāmī, on the other hand, the fakī does not seem to practise any physical punishment against his students - the muhājirīn.⁽²⁾ Instead, the established tradition has been to delegate his authority, in this respect to his assistants - the group leaders.⁽³⁾ As has been alluded to above each group of muhājirīn coming from the same locality usually lived together in one or adjacent huts, and selected their own group leader who would be entrusted, among other things, with maintaining discipline amongst his group.⁽⁴⁾

As for the other traditional big khalwas in the large villages or towns - such as that of al-fakī Sulaymān,⁽⁵⁾ or Bābikīr Nahār⁽⁶⁾, in al-Fāshir, they were said to have been following almost the same disciplinary system of the khalwas of

1. The writer's visit to, and interview with, al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā, al-Fāshir, 6th December 1981.
2. The writer's visit to the muhājirīn khalwa at Nāmī, December 1981.
3. Information from al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar, Nāmī, 9th December, 1981. The writer's interview with the students.
4. Interview with al-muhājirīn at the khalwa - see the muhājirīn khalwa at Nāmī, above.
5. Information from al-fakī Jiddū, former teacher at the khalwa, 7 December 1981.
6. Information from al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl.

Northern and Central Sudan.⁽¹⁾

In Eastern Sudan, and in particular at the main khalwas initiated by al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī, such as his famous khalwa of Hamishkorayb, no corporal punishment whatsoever has been practised at these khalwas - physical punishment was held to be degrading to the dignity of the individual learner.⁽²⁾ Instead the punishment took the form of verbal reprimand and ordering the punished person to stay behind at the khalwa, after the other students had left, and to repeat the lesson or do additional pieces of learning.⁽³⁾

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1. Information from al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl.
 2. Information from al-fakī al-Tāhir Abū Bakr.
 3. Ibid.

CHAPTER SEVEN

KHALWA ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING

A. Khalwa Administration

As could be seen from the survey of representatives of the main khalwa centres that flourished during the different periods of the history of Muslim Sudan, since its emergence in the 10th/16th century⁽¹⁾ and throughout these periods, the khalwa has remained largely a charitable, independent and non-Government institution. Hence there has almost been no direct State control except during the Condominium over the khalwa nizāmiyya - and that was exercised indirectly through political pressure and grants-in-aid to induce khalwas to comply with Government policy.⁽²⁾

During the Funj period (910/1504 - 1236/1820), as has been alluded to above,⁽³⁾ the rulers and the tribal leaders were not directly concerned with the educational activities in their regions - though they were often reported to have created favourable conditions for the arrival and settlement of the 'ulamā', and in particular the khalwa Shaykhs⁽⁴⁾, and to have provided them with their moral and material support.⁽⁵⁾

1. See Part I, Chapter Three.

2. See khalwa nizāmiyya, above.

3. See attitudes and condition of khalwas during "the Funj period", above.

4. Ibid.

5. See "Financial Aspect of khalwa Education", below.

Hence the responsibility for establishing, running, maintaining and managing the khalwas was shouldered by the voluntary effort of the individual teachers.

As has been demonstrated above, almost every one of the pioneer teachers was said to have been a founder of his own institution of learning (a mosque or a khalwa) or had it built for him.⁽¹⁾ Then as a self-appointed teacher each one seems to have established himself and embarked on voluntary teaching amongst his own people or in a region of his own choice.⁽²⁾

With the dominance of the Sūfī Orders, as has been alluded to above, almost all of the khalwa teachers were at the same time followers of the Sūfī Path - thus combining ‘ilm and Sūfism.⁽³⁾ Not only that, but many emerged as saints, believed by their followers to have been possessors of baraka and men of karāmāt (miracles).⁽⁴⁾

Such a development led to saint-cult - manifested in the visitations to the khalwa Shaykh and the erection of shrines and qubbas over his tomb when he died.⁽⁵⁾

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1. See "Teachers" above. Reference could be made to such teachers as al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī, Ibrāhīm al-Bulād, Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥamadū, Dafa‘allāh al-‘Arakī.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See Part I, Chapter Two.
 5. Ibid.

All this seems to have had a great bearing on khalwa administration and the wide spread of its orthodox Ṣūfī teachings.

The khalwa of the Ṣūfī Shaykh - the saint - became, in effect, the nucleus for nomads and larger settlements, with the qubba of the founder as a symbol of permanent settled life,⁽¹⁾ as evidenced today by the names of the villages and towns that bear the names of those pioneer khalwa founders and/or saints of the qubbās.⁽²⁾

As a result, more and more people joined the khalwa and were induced to seek learning and baraka at the hands of the khalwa Shaykh, not only from the locality but even from distant regions⁽³⁾ - this gave rise to the erection of khalwas of accommodation⁽⁴⁾ for the large away-from-home student population⁽⁵⁾ who would be living at the expense of the khalwa Shaykh.⁽⁶⁾ Consequently, such a khalwa would develop into a large complex⁽⁷⁾ often embracing the qubba of the founder, the khalwa of study, a mosque for Friday

1. See Part I, Chapter Two.

2. Such as Wad Ḥusūna, Wad Bān al-Naqā, Wad Medani, al-Damer of al-Majādhīb, al-Ghubush, Wad al-Fādnī, and so on.

3. See "Students/hijra", above.

4. See "Students/khalwas of Accommodation", above.

5. See "Students/population", above.

6. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

7. Such as that of Ḥamadū at Nūrī, Ṣughayrūn, al-Majādhīb, see above.

prayer, students and guests khalwas of accommodation, beside this but separately would be the residence of the khalwa Shaykh - and all would be surrounded with the homes of the followers of the Ṣūfī Shaykh which constituted the village.⁽¹⁾

However, it was largely because they were believed to have been men of baraka and piety - in addition to their devotion and great task of disseminating religious teachings - that the Ṣūfī Shaykhs were able to secure the moral, and above all, the material and financial support of the masses (and rulers) to effectively maintain, throughout the generations, their khalwa centres.⁽²⁾

Further, as founder of their own institution of learning (mosque and khalwa) as chief Ṣūfī khalwa Shaykh (or khalīfa) such a man was, in effect, in charge of the administration of his institutions, the initiation of his followers in the Ṣūfī path and, above all, holding the post of the one or principal

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1. All of the main Ṣūfī khalwa centres have been surrounded by or adjacent to large residential areas, which grew around it.
 2. See "Financial Aspect", below. This phenomenon still holds true for the Ṣūfī-dependent khalwa centres, such as Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Abū Qurūn, Tayba, etc. This seems to explain their relative prosperity. In contrast, non-Ṣūfī dependent khalwas, such as those of al-muhājirīn in Western Sudan, could not maintain their students whom they turned into semi-beggars (see above).

teacher,⁽¹⁾ of his one-room school - the khalwa - which (following the policy of open admission and a monitorial system of instruction)⁽²⁾ embraced all ages and stages and opened all day and throughout the year.⁽³⁾ In addition, he was the imām in prayer, the healer and the leader of his followers.⁽⁴⁾

Not only that but the occupants of those posts used to hold them as life jobs - shouldering their responsibilities and enjoying their privileges.⁽⁵⁾ Moreover, when the founder died his posts, titles and functions - including teaching - were inherited by his descendants, often by his nominee.⁽⁶⁾

In reference to that tradition Hillelson stated that,

"the office of khalīfa of the khalwa was hereditary, though it did not necessarily descend to the eldest son. The khalīfa inherited his predecessor's administration and teaching office and the right to initiate the disciples into the Sūfī path; he was the guardian of the tomb and

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1. Reference could be made to almost all the pioneer khalwa teachers such as al-Shaykh Maḥmūd al-‘Arakī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jābir, Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn, Ḥamadū, ‘Isā al-Anṣārī, ‘Abdallāh Aghbash.
 2. See "Methods of teaching and learning", above.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See Part I, Ch. Two ; see "Teachers" for more functions.
 5. See khalwa centres survey above, and khalwa teachers of n.1, above.
 6. Ibid.

administered the revenues..."⁽¹⁾

It was that hereditary factor which seems to have become the dominant feature of Muslim education in the Sudan, and seems to have characterized the different aspects of khalwa education - especially its administration methods and practices.⁽²⁾ The subsequent generations of khalwa teachers seem to have inherited intact all the khalwa educational experiences and practices of their predecessors - with all their merits and shortcomings - and seem intent to perpetuate them - hence the extreme conservative nature of khalwa education.⁽³⁾

However, as far as khalwa administration was concerned, such a tradition seems to have consolidated the authority of the founder as chief administrator or indeed as the first leader in his community. Moreover it has, in effect, secured the continuation of that authority in the descendants of the founder and have transformed them into families of khalwa teachers - and indeed an elite

1. Hillelson, SNR, vol XIX p.228.

2. See that hereditary system of administration and other khalwa practices was demonstrated by almost all khalwa centres surveyed above during the Funj period - such as those of Kutranj, Sughayrūn, al-Majādhīb, al-Ghubush; see below for more elaboration.

3. See "Subjects and Books", "Methods of Teaching", "Teaching Aids" etc. above; see the perpetuation of these practices by the present-day khalwas such as Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī, above.

class in their community.⁽¹⁾ The Sūfī rituals, the visitations to the qubba and the khalīfa and the continuation of the spread of the stories of the karāmāt by and amongst the followers seem to have served as constant reminders to the masses of their inherited right.

Under the Turco-Egyptian rule in the Sudan (1236/1820 - 1302/1885) as alluded to above, when the early period of invasion and national resistance and general unrest was over, general life, gradually, came to normal and traditional khalwa education was resumed.⁽²⁾ The Turco-Egyptian administration was reported to have adopted an attitude of non-interference in the organisation and the internal affairs of the khalwa.⁽³⁾

Nevertheless, the Turco-Egyptian government was said to have extended financial and material aid to a great number of khalwa fakīs, on request,⁽⁴⁾ and encouraged the khalwa graduates to join al-Azhar in Egypt.

Hence, it was assumed that almost the same pattern, type and practices of mosque and khalwa education that were prevalent during

1. Such as al-Ghubush and al-Majādhīb.

2. See Attitudes and condition of khalwas and "the Turco-Egyptian Period", above.

3. Ibid.

4. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

the Funj era (910/1504 - 1236/1820) seem to have been perpetuated during the Turco-Egyptian period in the Sudan.⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, it is believed that almost the same administrative practices of khalwa education referred to above⁽²⁾ were continued under the Turco-Egyptian regime. As an illustration of this trend reference could be made to the developments - in particular the administrative - of the mosque-khalwa of Kutrānj and its branches, al-Masīd and al-Mas'ūdiyya, during this period, indicating a continuation of the khalwa practices of the Funj era.⁽³⁾

Although the Turco-Egyptian administration in the Sudan seems to have followed a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the khalwas, yet through the provision of material and financial aid it seems to have influenced khalwa education.⁽⁴⁾ Not only that but in order to control the financial and material aid to khalwas an attempt was made by the Ḥumdār Mazhar Pasha in 1286/1869 to set up an administrative inspectorate to sort out the requests of genuine khalwa teachers for financial assistance from the ones submitted by pretenders.⁽⁵⁾

However, on the whole, khalwas' affairs continued to be handled by their traditional teachers.

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, pp.18-19.

2. See also khalwa centres of the Funj period.

3. See the khalwa of Kutrānj and its branches, (Irshād and Kutrānj).

4. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

5. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, pp.62-65.

The period of the Mahdiyya , as referred to above, was devoted to jihād and hence most of the khalwa Shaykhs suspended their educational functions and embarked on mobilizing their followers in support of al-Mahdī's call.⁽¹⁾

Although al-Mahdī carried a drastic change in the content of khalwa, the traditional administrative aspect of khalwa education seems to have continued as before. Nevertheless, as a result of al-Mahdī's ban on Ṣūfism and its rituals - such as ḥalqas of dhikr, visitations of qubbas, writing of amulets and saint cult in general - much of the traditional authority of the khalwa Shaykhs seems to have been undermined, and the khalwa Shaykhs were, in effect, reduced to Qur'ān fakīs.⁽²⁾

However, al-Mahdī's premature death did not give him time to carry out wider social reforms in such fields as education.⁽³⁾ His successor, al-khalīfa 'Abdullāhi, although he enforced al-Mahdī's teachings, seems to have been greatly preoccupied with consolidating the revolution, and the whole period was too short (1885-1898) to effect any significant change.

During the Condominium rule (1898-1955) the khalwa, as

1. See Attitudes and condition of khalwas under "al-Mahdiyya. Period", above.
2. See al-Mahdī's teachings, above.
3. See Attitudes and condition of khalwas under "al-Mahdiyya Period", above.

indicated above,⁽¹⁾ was subjected to a systematic hostile policy that resulted, almost, in its liquidation and substitution by the modern elementary school.⁽²⁾

Nevertheless, those khalwas - especially the traditional Sūfī-supported khalwas - which could survive the Condominium period, seem to have been following almost the same inherited traditional khalwa practices as far as the internal administration of the khalwa was concerned.⁽³⁾ The imposition of the khalwa nizāmiyya seems to have modified important aspects of the khalwa system - such as the content of education, the in-service teacher training and financing and inspection, but not the traditional general administrative set-up of the khalwa, where the traditional fakī was still in charge of his khalwa.

However, as alluded to before, many of the traditional khalwas were induced to introduce secular subjects, to have their teachers retrained (in order to teach these secular subjects) and to accept regular supervision by the Government educational authorities⁽⁴⁾ - and against that the khalwa teachers would be paid grants in aid.⁽⁵⁾

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1. See Attitudes and condition of khalwas under the "Condominium Period", above.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Such as Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī and Kadabās.
 4. RFACS, (1925), p.45; see Attitudes and condition of khalwas under the "Condominium rule", above.
 5. Ibid.; see "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.

Such a policy was reported to have - in time - proved to be extremely successful and hundreds of khalwas were transformed into assisted khalwas - better known as khalwa nizāmiyya (organised khalwas).⁽¹⁾

In order to execute its set policy to raise and sustain their efficiency, these assisted khalwas - the khalwa nizāmiyya - were reported to have been subjected to general control and inspection by the Education Department, and the local organization of those khalwas left in the hands of the Province officials.⁽²⁾

When the rival subgrade school was created, both the subgrade school and the khalwa nizāmiyya were put under the control of local governments, but supervised by the Province Education Officers.⁽³⁾

However, due to the Government's withdrawal of aid and change of attitude, these khalwas seem to have been eventually liquidated.⁽⁴⁾

Under National rule (since Independence in 1956) in sharp contrast to the Condominium Government's attitude and policies towards khalwa education then, the State's attitudes and policies

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1. RFACS (1928), p.93; ibid., (1929) p.89; ibid., (1930) p.93; ibid., (1931), p.74.
 2. Ibid., (1928), p.93.
 3. Ibid., (1948), p.140.
 4. See Attitude and condition of khalwas under "Condominium Period", above.

have been supportive - morally, financially and technically.⁽¹⁾

All this seems to have been in response to demands from interested khalwa Shaykhs and from the masses in regions of traditional khalwa dominance, as a result of which thousands of khalwas have emerged - concentrated in the regions of Eastern and Western Sudan.⁽²⁾

Most of the State's effort, however, seems to have been directed to the building up of administrative machinery at the central, regional and departmental levels, to the creation of agencies and the setting out of supportive policies.⁽³⁾

In spite of the building up of an impressive hierarchy of administrative machinery at the central and provincial levels - as exemplified in the creation of the Department of Religious Affairs on the eve of Independence in 1955, (with one of its objectives "to look after khalwas and institutions concerned with the memorization of the Qur'ān")⁽⁴⁾ and the establishment of the Agency of Ihya' Nār al-Qur'ān in 1965 (with the objective of promoting the memorization of the Qur'ān through training of reciters and, specifically, by provision of technical supervision

1. See Attitudes and condition of khalwas under National Period", above.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Hamad al-Nīl, pp.59-60; Tarīkh al-Qur'ān, p.25.

to khalwas)⁽¹⁾ and the transformation of the Department of Religious Affairs into the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the Agency into a Central Department of Religious Studies,⁽²⁾ and the subsequent creation of regional departments for religious affairs at the provincial capitals,⁽³⁾ in addition to the creation of the Supreme Council for Religious Affairs,⁽⁴⁾ and despite the much rhetoric by the President that was echoed by the Minister of Religious Affairs, and the State's policy repeatedly expressed in the official documents - which all pay tribute to the khalwa institution as the basis of the Islamic cultural heritage in the Sudan and hence emphasizes the urgency of looking after its affairs by transforming it into a better Islamic educational Institution - despite all the above, in actuality very little seems to have been done to improve the conditions of the khalwa institution and transform it into an Islamic institution that would positively respond to the needs of the people and the requirements of the age.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Hamad al-Nīl, pp.59-60; Tārīkh al Qur'ān, p.25; see also "Attitudes and Condition of khalwas under National Period", above.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.
 5. See the President's speeches on the occasions of the Annual Festivals of the Qur'ān (see Attitudes and conditions under "National Period").
 6. In Northern and Central Sudan khalwas, institutions seem to have been shunned by the people of their localities because they fail to attract them; (see khalwas of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādnī, above).

In effect, it seems to have been given lip service merely to encourage it to revive on almost the same traditional lines of the Funj era.⁽¹⁾

On the administrative aspect the Department of Religious Affairs maintains nominal linkage with the individual khalwas through the payment of the nominal monthly allowances to the khalwa fakīs.⁽²⁾

On the aspect of technical supervision the contacts between the Government officials and the fakīs of the khalwas were reported to have been extremely weak. According to a survey conducted in 1976, only 41% of the khalwas were covered by the representatives of the inspectorates and the visits of these were very occasional - once a year or two years.⁽³⁾

Hence the whole responsibility of running the khalwas seems to have been left almost entirely to their individual Shaykhs.

At the khalwa level, however, almost the same traditional practices that were handed down from the Funj era seem to have

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1. See the proposal of the Chairman of the Supreme Council for Religious Affairs, (Y. al-Khalifa) above.
 2. See "Financial aspect of khalwa education", below.
 3. Nūr, p.18.

been handed down to and perpetuated by the present day khalwas.⁽¹⁾

On the administrative aspect of khalwa education with which we are more concerned, the same pattern of khalwa administration under the Funj and the subsequent periods could be illustrated below as follows.

At the summit of the khalwa administrative hierarchy is the khalīfa or the khalwa Shaykh who was handed down his post and titles through a hereditary system - by descent.⁽²⁾

The khalīfa is in charge of the overall administration of the khalwa complex, his Ṣūfī followers (in the Ṣūfī-supported centres) and the learners and their teachers.⁽³⁾

To help him carry out his functions smoothly and efficiently, the khalwa khalīfa - according to the inherited practices - usually delegates his functions to a number of relatively efficient and dedicated followers, who serve as his deputies or assistants (wukalā).⁽⁴⁾

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1. The reference is to the main khalwa centres such as those of Kadabās, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādnī, as surveyed above.
 2. See the administration of the khalwas of al-Majādhīb, Umm Dawwan Bān and Wad al-Fādnī, above.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

B. The Financial Aspect of khalwa Education

On the financial aspect, and in comparison to the administrative, the khalwa seems to have witnessed more important and significant developments.

As alluded to above and as evidenced by the survey of the khalwa centres⁽¹⁾, the khalwa has continued functioning as a private enterprise, providing throughout the ages, not only free education but also accommodation, food, clothes, and sometimes pocket money, for an unrestricted student population, which would reach hundreds and often exceed a thousand.⁽²⁾

We are concerned, in this section, with shedding light on the ways and means through which the khalwa authorities, across the ages, seem to have managed, effectively, to meet the costs of running and the upkeep of their khalwas - especially the large khalwa centres.

A variety of factors and means of help seem to have enabled the khalwa authorities to carry out their difficult task.

In the past - especially during the Funj period - life seems

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1. The reference is made to all the khalwa centres surveyed, above.
 2. See the size of student population at some of the khalwas surveyed in the chapter "Students", above.

to have been considerably simpler and the people's needs and requirements for living were humble and seem to have been met from their immediate environment to which they were attached.

That simple mode of living which characterized life of the past generations could be evidenced by the fact that, even up to the present time, the Sudan has remained, in the main, a rural country dependent largely on pastoral and traditional agricultural activities with vast agricultural resources - land, water, pasture, forests and considerable animal wealth.

The people were leading a modest life as reflected in their modest lodgings, clothes and food. According to Shuqayr the inhabitants of the sedentary regions of Northern Sudan (along the Nile, north of Khartoum) used to live in humble houses built of unbaked bricks or of mud known as jālūs; ⁽¹⁾ in central Sudan they lived in quttīyyas; ⁽²⁾ in the Beja region in Eastern Sudan and the nomads, in tents; and western Sudan in huts. ⁽³⁾ Their clothes were simple and made of cotton or wool woven locally (dammūr), and their food was mainly surghum (dura), meat (fresh or dried), vegetables and milk, all obtained from their local environments. ⁽⁴⁾ All this seems to have made the

1. See al-Majādhīb khalwa centre, above.

2. Because of environmental factors - rains in particular - houses were built in the form of cylindrical bases and conical tops.

3. Shuqayr, vol.I, pp.14-15.

4. Ibid., vol.I, pp.196-220 for further information.

cost of living considerably low.

Of more significance and relevance to the issue of cost of khalwa education, then, was the fact that the khalwa emerged as a Sūfī institution⁽¹⁾ and the Sūfīs, it should be emphasized, "came to represent asceticism, retirement from the world and devotion to the Divine worship".⁽²⁾ Hence, their institutions were more humble in form and their needs simpler than those of the masses of their followers at the time.⁽³⁾

In fact, the khalwa has come to represent a humble form or structure consisting of one or two rooms of study surrounded by a spacious courtyard, and humble rooms of accommodation for the students, all embraced by a wall or enclosure of dry branches of trees. The khalwa could be a room of jālūs,⁽⁴⁾ a hut,⁽⁵⁾ a tent⁽⁶⁾ even a tree⁽⁷⁾, depending on the environment. It has barely any furniture; the students would sit on mats made of leaves of

1. See chapter Tow, (Part I) above.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddima, vol.III, p.77.

3. This was almost a common characteristic of almost all of the Sūfī khalwa Shaykhs of the Funj period.

4. Even at present the general mode of khalwa structure is generally simple. They are built of jālūs (mud) in Northern Provinces.

5. They are built in the form of huts in Western Sudan.

6. They are built in the form of tents in the nomadic region of the Beja.

7. Because of the hot climate the halqas are often held under shady trees.

palm trees (birūsh) or on the bare sandy floor, while the fakī sat on his sheep-skin mat.⁽¹⁾

The teaching aids have always been simple and made locally: the lawh (the tablet) made of wood, the pen of reeds or dura stems, the 'amār (ink) made of gum Arabic and soot, while firewood collected by the students themselves served as a source of light and fuel, and drinking water/^{was} fetched from the river or wells.⁽²⁾ Hence, the low cost of khalwa buildings and equipment.

Another factor which seems to have contributed to the low cost of khalwa education was the perpetuation of the traditional practice of the khalwa as one-room school, embracing learners of different ages and stages of academic progress under one roof;⁽³⁾ and by following a monitorial system of instruction, the khalwa has been conducted as a one-teacher school, assisted by his own students.⁽⁴⁾

Nevertheless, and in addition to all the above, the khalwa Sūfī Shaykhs used to receive substantial material aid and moral support from their followers, their students and from the rulers and tribal leaders.

1. See "Teaching Aids" above, for further information on these points.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

The followers of the khalwa Shaykhs used to help their khalwa Shaykh in a variety of ways. By settling around their ⁽¹⁾ Ṣūfī Shaykh, as alluded to above, the masses of the followers seem to have actually pledged their loyalty and support to him, and this was often reflected in providing voluntary labour to the Shaykh or the fakī - building his khalwas, cultivating his land or rearing his animals.⁽²⁾

In addition, as alluded to before,⁽³⁾ parents and followers used to provide the khalwa Shaykhs with symbolic presents on several occasions.

On the weekly occasion of karāma (offering) they would give the khalwa students, who went around for collection of grain, beans and even money. The khalwa students would boil some of what they collected to make balīla⁽⁴⁾, or karāma and the remainder would go to the fakī's household.⁽⁵⁾

In addition, on certain days of the week, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, parents would give their children presents for the

1. See *PP. 53/-2*, above.

2. This was the universal practice of the followers of the Ṣūfī Shaykhs, as often heard from the fakīs and the masses.

3. See "Methods of Teaching", above.

4. Shuqayr, *op. cit.*, vol.I, p.141.

5. Al-Tayyib, "The Changing Customs", p.59.

fakī - usually in the form of money.

Further, on the occasions of al-sharāfa and the khatma,⁽¹⁾ parents and the village community would give gifts in cash and kind to the khalwa fakī.⁽²⁾ On the occasion of the khatma in particular, depending on the financial situation of the parents, in addition to the gift of a sheep or a calf which would be slaughtered for the feast of the khalwa residents, parents usually gave presents to the khalwa fakī, in cash and kind. In confirmation of this old custom, al-Tabaqāt mentions that the father of the khalwa student 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥājj al-Duwayhī, on the occasion of the completion of the study of his son, under al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd, gave the teacher, as a gift, a horse with a servant to look after it.⁽³⁾

However, it was on the small weekly gifts, according to 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib, that the livelihood of junior instructors (fakīs) depended - even in peasant and trading communities such as al-Dāmer and Berber.⁽⁴⁾

The followers of the Sūfī khalwa Shaykh used to pay, on visitations of the Shaykh or his qubba, presents, in cash or kind, which they had solemnly pledged to pay, when their wishes were granted - nudhūr and sadaqāt. In reference to

1. See "Methods of Teaching", above.

2. Ibid.

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.286.

4. Al-Ṭayyib, op. cit., p.58.

this custom al-Tabaqāt states that the followers of al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb used to deposit at his tomb different types of sadaqāt and nudhūr in the form of cloth, money and food⁽¹⁾ which those in charge of the qubba would collect.

Similarly, at most of the qubbas of the Sūfī saints, their followers would leave presents or sadaqāt. However, at the tombs of al-Majādhīb of al-Damer some of their followers would leave sadaqāt, but these were collected by members of certain families (not related to al-Majādhīb) who would keep these places clean; and not by the khalwa Shaykhs or the descendants of al-Majādhīb who used to refrain - on religious grounds - from accepting them.⁽²⁾

The Sūfī Shaykhs used to receive pious gifts from followers, not only of the immediate vicinity, but even from tribes and individuals coming from distant and remote regions. According to al-Tabaqāt Muḥammad b. Fāyid, a disciple of al-Shaykh Idrīs b. al-Arbāb, used to come annually, for visitation to his ṣhaykh, accompanied by the tribesmen of Eastern Sudan - such as the Arab nomads of Akud and al-Tāka - all loaded with gifts of money, silver, food (grain, flour, honey, etc.), animals (camels and horses), cloth and slaves.⁽³⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.160.

2. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Damer).

3. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.58-60.

Another reference could be made to al-Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-Ḥalanqī who used to come from Eastern Sudan, also, to visit his master, al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī (1003/1595 - 1094/1683).⁽¹⁾

During his stay at the khalwa centre of his dead Shaykh, at Abū Ḥarāz, he was reported to have been visited, every year, by large caravans of his followers who would come loaded with presents of clothes, food - farīk (or fresh dura), honey and samn (butter) - all of which he would distribute among the members of the family of his Shaykh, the 'Arakiyyīn of Abū Ḥarāz.⁽²⁾

From Kordufān, Western Sudan, the followers of al-faqīh Ḥamad b. Maryam (b.1055/1645), from the tribe of Bani Jarrār, were reported to have been in the tradition of visiting their Shaykh every year at his centre (near Khartoum), bringing their zakāt of their animals.⁽³⁾

Also, according to al-Tabaqāt, when al-Shaykh Aḥmad b. Ziyāda b. al-Nūr b. al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā (Suwār al-Dhahab), became a khalifa, he was said to have been in the practice of sending, every year, a boat as large as those of al-Ḥijāz (Red Sea) to his ex-students (of the Qur'ān) of the region north of Dongola, who would load it with all types of zakāt and sadaqāt.⁽⁴⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.209-210.

2. Ibid., p.267.

3. Ibid., p.181.

4. Ibid., p.218.

As an act of support to their Sūfī Shaykh and his khalwa of study, and above all as an act pleasing to God, the people of a village, where there was a khalwa with no living facilities, used to distribute the away-from-home khalwa learners amongst themselves, take care of them and treat them as their own children throughout their years of study.⁽¹⁾

The khalwa Shaykhs and fakīs used, also, to obtain presents (or charges) - commonly known as bayād - from their followers for the treatment of a variety of illnesses such as headaches, nausea, mental depression and many children's depressions.⁽²⁾

Certain Sūfī Shaykhs, however, became famous for the treatment of even more serious diseases, such as al-Shaykh Muḥammad Jaylī,⁽³⁾ and al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. Ḥusūna,⁽⁴⁾ who used to cure madness. Others were said to claim to have the power to promise barren parents children,⁽⁵⁾ or even to restore the dead to life.⁽⁶⁾

Their followers believed in them and used to pay them generously.⁽⁷⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.I, p.120. See also "Accommodation of khalwa students", below.

2. Al-Ṭayyib, op. cit., p.58.

3. Al-Ṭabaqāt, p.350.

4. Ibid., p.146.

5. Ibid., pp.274-5.

6. Ibid., p.144.

7. Ibid., pp.141, 147, 274.

It seems interesting to refer briefly to the Shaykh's personal sources of income - by treating the sick. They seem to have been using different types of treatment, the common among them were the following:⁽¹⁾

- a) 'Azīma: the fakī would recite some verses of the Qur'ān or read prayers asking God to restore the health of the sick - by driving away the evil eye that had caused the harm.
- b) Al-mihāya: the khalwa Shaykh would write verses of the Qur'ān and prayers on the wooden lawh and wash off the writing by pouring clean water over it. The washed off mixture is known as al-mihāya which the sick person would be told to use for rubbing, or sprinkling over the body, or even drinking it, in order to secure the treatment.
- c) Al-bakhrāt: the fakī would write verses of the Qur'ān, prayers or sometimes charms on pieces of paper, fold them, and hand them to the patient to burn them over charcoal and expose his or her body to its smoke, and even inhale it, while wrapping his or her whole body, by cover, so as to use the smoke of the bakhra (sing.) to the maximum.
- d) Hijāb (pl. ahjiba or hijbāt): these were amulets for

1. Information from different khalwa fakīs: from Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Tayba and al-Fāshir.

which the khalwa Shaykh would write prayers on a piece of paper to be wrapped in leather and worn, by means of a string round the neck or on the arm. According to al-Tabaqāt, al-faqīh ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd used to be engaged in writing amulets during the weekly holiday.⁽¹⁾

- e) Huwāta: this was a sort of prayer to protect persons and property from harm and even to recover lost property.⁽²⁾
- f) Herbalism: in addition to the above, some of the khalwa Shaykhs were said to have been using some herbs and vegetable essences, whose efficacy they had learnt through long experience, in the treatment of their sick followers.⁽³⁾

What is of more concern to us from the above is that the khalwa shaykhs or fakīs were said to have been drawing some small profits, from the sale of these charms, which would enable them to live.⁽⁴⁾

According to Trimingham, such "industry is quite innocent, the talismans do no-one any harm and always produce a favourite effect upon the imagination. Besides, the fakī does not seek to deceive others, he believes as they do in the efficacy of these

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.284.

2. Ibid., pp.123, 203.

3. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.140.

4. Ibid.

charms."⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless, the serious damages that seem to have resulted from such apparently innocent practices was the development of a blind belief in the efficacy of the spiritual power of the Ṣūfī khalwa Shaykh - as a direct product of saint-cult, it seems, as intermediary between God and man.

This led to other damage that seems to have been exemplified in the exploitation of the credulity of the innocent and ignorant masses by some pretenders to extract money or material benefit by alleging that charms and talismans could deliver the goods.⁽²⁾

Further, through the ages, some of the descendents of the successive generations of Ṣūfī Shaykhs seem to have developed an attitude against modern medication and education and seem to have influenced those followers around them, by inducing them to adhere to the old traditional khalwa practices, described above, thus risking innocent lives or precious lost property instead of seeking adequate modern medicine, or reporting to the police.⁽³⁾

1. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, p.140.

2. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer).

3. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer); the writer observed many different sick persons complaining from stomach pains, severe fever and persons whose animals were stolen - all going on visitations to the qubbas and Ṣūfī Shaykhs of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān (November-December, 1981).

The khalwa students, too, throughout the ages seem to have been contributing substantially towards the maintenance of their khalwas of study and their teachers, through labour, collection of presents or by supporting themselves.

Al-Tabaqāt makes many references to the contribution of khalwa students in this respect.

Al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jābir, as alluded to above, seems to have been employing his students for his personal service, as was demonstrated by the example of 'Abdallāh al-'Arakī who - as a student - was working in the fields collecting fodder for his master's horses.⁽¹⁾

Al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. Ḥusūna was reported to have been employing the fuqarā' (students) to make him copies of the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾

Al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh b. Abī Idrīs (1003/1595 - 1044/1683) was said to have sent his son Muḥammad, accompanied by a number of his students, in order to cultivate his land at Karkawj in the region of al-Hawy, and Muḥammad would revise the lessons of al-fuqarā' (after the day's work in the fields).⁽³⁾

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.253.

2. Ibid., p.141.

3. Ibid., p.330.

Al-faqīh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Usayd (d.1127/1715) was reported to have discovered, one day, that five of his students (Sa'd al-Karsanī, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥājj Duwayh, 'Abd al-Karīm b. Abbaru, Ḥasab al-Nabī b. Bahr and Ḥamad al-Sīd b. Balla.) had irrigated his land which the river had failed to irrigate.⁽¹⁾ So he was pleased and prayed to God to bless them.

Al-faqīh Qaqūm b. Ibrāhīm b. Barrī, according to al-Tabaqāt, was supporting at his khalwa about five hundred students of the Qur'ān, whom he seems to have been employing in his fields; and for this purpose he had ninety sickles which were used by the students in turn - each group using them for a whole week.⁽²⁾

In addition to the traditional custom of collecting firewood and fetching the drinking water, khalwa students used to erect or help in the erection of their own khalwas and were always responsible for the cleansing of the khalwa premises.⁽³⁾ Moreover, they used to give a helping hand to the village people - the followers of their Shaykh - especially during the harvest season.⁽⁴⁾

From the above, it seems clear that during the Funj period

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.283.

2. Ibid., p.314.

3. Information from the muhājirīn of the khalwa of Nāmī, below.

4. Information from ustādh al-Naqar, al-Dāmer, November, 1981 and from ustādh 'Alī, brother of the khalīfa of Kadabās, Nov., 1981.

the khalwa students were contributing in sharing the burden of cost of their khalwa education. Such a positive contribution by the khalwa students seems to have been encouraged and perpetuated by traditional khalwas. However, this aspect of the students' activities seems to have been, later, exploited and distorted by the muhājirīn fakīs.⁽¹⁾

The contribution of the Sudanese rulers, in this respect, was also considerable. The Funj sultāns, the 'Abdallābi viceroys and the tribal chieftains, although they had no control over education, were reported to have been extending a generous hand to the khalwa Shaykhs and fakīs - granting lands, exempting them from taxation and furnishing them with presents.

According to 'Abd al-Majīd, the Funj kingdom was subdivided into several small kingdoms and Shaykhdoms; each junior king or sultan was to pay to the Sultān of Sennar a fixed amount or a share of the taxation he would collect from his region.⁽²⁾

In a similar way, according to Shuqayr, the Sultāns of Dārfūr, starting with Sultān Mūsā, divided the kingdom into sedentary and nomadic regions.⁽³⁾ He subdivided the sedentary region into estates which he distributed among his relatives and his close associates of the notables.⁽⁴⁾ He also assigned

1. See the khalwa of al-Muhājirīn, Nāmī, Dārfūr.

2. 'Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., vol.I, pp.113-4.

3. Shuqayr, vol.II, p.137.

4. Ibid.

the princes and notables, each to be in charge of a branch of the nomadic tribes and to live on the revenues they collected.⁽¹⁾

In accordance with the Shari'a law the Fur sultans were said to have obtained their share of zakat, fitra and 'ushūr.⁽²⁾

As far as the khalwa and their teachers were concerned, both the Funj and Fur sultans were said to have been exempting the khalwa Shaykhs from taxation. Not only that but they used to grant them land, slaves for labour and other presents as can be illustrated below.

King Bādī b. Rubāt (1020 - 23 A.H.) in response to a request by al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣughayrūn, was reported to have granted him the clearance of land he had chosen for his settlement to establish his mosque khalwa, to have access to the river, to own land for cultivation and a site for burials.⁽³⁾

King Bādī b. Rubāt was also reported to have granted al-Shaykh Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab a written jāh (written royal guarantee exempting the person concerned from taxation) - covering not only al-Shaykh Suwār al-Dhahab and his descendants but even all those studying under him.⁽⁴⁾

1. Shuqayr, vol.II, p.137.

2. Ibid.; fitra (sadaqa paid at end of Ramadān); 'ushūr (taxation 1/10th of produce).

3. Al-Tabaqāt, p.237.

4. Ibid., p.218.

When later his grandson al-Shaykh Ziyāda b. al-Nūr b. al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Īsā Suwār al-Dhahab became khalīfa the privilege of the jāh was not only confirmed but even extended to include all the Danāgla (tribe of al-Shaykh Suwār al-Dhahab and his successors).⁽¹⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Ajīb the Great, the 'Abdallābi viceroy of the Sultān of Sennar, was said to have granted the khalīfa of the khalwa of al-Ghubush, Berber district, the river islands in the vicinity of the khalwa to cultivate for living.⁽²⁾

Al-Shaykh 'Ajīb was also reported to have built a mosque for al-faqīh 'Alī b. 'Ishayb⁽³⁾, and the Funj sultan granted him extensive lands for cultivation in the region of al-Hawy, and he was appointed as a judge.⁽⁴⁾

Sultān Dakīn b. Nāyil, on one occasion, was reported to have sent to al-Shaykh al-Nūr b. Suwār al-Dhahab fifty head of slaves to work for him.⁽⁵⁾

Sultān Unsā b. Nāṣir (accession 1087/1677) when visited by

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.218.

2. Information of the khalīfa 'Abd al-Majīd, descendant of al-Ghubush, at the Mosque of al-Ghubush, November, 1981.

3. 'Alī b. 'Ishayb was a study companion of Ibrāhīm al-Būlād at Azhar, in Egypt (al-Tabaqāt, p.257).

4. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.256-7.

al-faqīh al-Mudawwī b. al-Misrī (d.1095/1684) at his court in Sennar, he was reported to have suspended his majlis, embraced al-Mudawwī and presented him with lavish gifts.⁽¹⁾

In the Funj kingdom, the notables too seem to have followed their rulers in their generous attitudes towards the khalwa teachers. For example, al-Ḥājj Sa'īd b. Dāwūd was reported to have built a mosque of brick for al-Shaykh Dafa'allāh al-'Arakī and to have granted him twelve head of slaves (six males and six females) for his service, and was said to have endowed the khalwa with twenty-two jad'a (about one hundred and ten acres) of cultivation land in the region of al-Hawy (Gezira).⁽²⁾

In Dārfūr, as alluded to above, the sultāns used to exempt the khalwa fakīs from taxation and even to grant them the right to collect the taxation, (sadaqāt, zakāt and fitra) of certain villages and make use of their revenue in the maintenance of their khalwas and their students.

In reference to such a practice Shuqayr states that in Dārfūr there were many mosques - in each village there was a masjid (or khalwa) in which the Qur'ān, reading and writing were taught; and each 'ālim used to have a mosque for prayer near his house and beside it there were the khalwas of students

1. Al-Tabaqāt, pp.103-4

2. Ibid., p.330.

where Shari'a subjects were taught.⁽¹⁾ In matters of finance each 'ālim used to have a hakūra as a grant from the Sultān for the maintenance of his household and his students.⁽²⁾

In further confirmation of this tradition, O'Fahey cites the example of al-faqīh Muḥammad Haddūj al-Kinānī who was reported to have migrated from the Blue Nile region to Darfur in the 12th/18th century, and established a mosque-khalwa at al-Firsh, near al-Fāshir, and was granted a hakūra by the sultān of the day, and the validity of that grant was confirmed by Sultān 'Alī Dīnār.⁽³⁾

Another example of the support of the Fur sultans to the khalwa fakīs in their region seems to have been illustrated by the establishment of the mosque-khalwa of Jadīd al-Sayl by Sultan 'Umar Layl (about 1159/1746-7 - 1167/1753-4) on a piece of land said to have been granted earlier as a waqf (endowment) by Sultān Ahmad Bakr (1128/1715 - 1141/1728) to al-faqīh Muḥammad 'Izz al-Dīn (of al-Jammu'iyya tribe) to help him and his descendants maintain their khalwa of study and that waqf was reported to have been confirmed by the successive Fur sultans up to the reign of Sultān 'Alī Dīnār (1316/1898 - 1335/1916).⁽⁴⁾

1. Shuqayr, vol.II, p.146.

2. Ibid.; - a hakūra (pl. hawākīr) was an estate, consisting usually of a village or a group of villages, granted by the Sultāns to title holders, members of the royal family or Muslim holy men - such as fakīs as a waqf (O'Fahey, I/14.)

3. O'Fahey, vol.I, pp.19-47.

4. O'Fahey, vol.II, pp.21-50.

Thus, as a result of the positive contribution of all the factors mentioned above towards the cost of khalwa education during the Funj period, the khalwa teachers seem to have managed to maintain themselves, their khalwas and their students. Not only that but some of them seem to have accumulated considerable material wealth - such as al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jabīr,⁽¹⁾ and al-Shaykh Ḥasan b. Ḥysūna.⁽²⁾

However, some of the khalwa Shaykhs such as al-Majādhīb of al-Dāmer were reported to have refrained from following the tradition of the other Sūfī Shaykhs and khalwa fakīs of the time of accepting donations of sadaqāt (alms).

Unlike most of the khalwa teachers who used to depend for living - to a great extent - on the help and donations of their followers for the upkeep of their families and their khalwas, al-Majādhīb of al-Dāmer were said to have depended, almost entirely, on themselves in maintaining their household and the large student population of their khalwas, in addition to the caravans of travellers and guests who used to frequent their khalwas.⁽³⁾

This independent attitude of self-support has been indicated in al-Tabaqāt in relation to their famous religious leader and

1. Al-Tabaqāt, p.258.

2. Ibid., pp.138-139.

3. Interview with al-Naqar, (al-Dāmer), 14th November, 1981.

real founder of their khalwas, al-Shaykh Ḥamad al-Majdhūb⁽¹⁾ who seems to have been earning his living from his own sources and trade as builder of his sāqiya (water-wheel).⁽²⁾

That practice of self-reliance in financing their famous khalwas at al-Dāmer was said to have been perpetuated by the subsequent generations of al-Majādhīb - even up to the present time as could be evidenced by the example of the khalwa of al-Majādhīb's descendants at al-Ṣūfī al-Azraq at al-Gadaref, Eastern Sudan.⁽³⁾

In effect, al-Majādhīb of al-Dāmer during the Funj period were said to have refrained from accepting any form of sadaqāt or nudhūr, whether from their followers or from their students.⁽⁴⁾

Such a stand was said to have been based on legal basis: al-Majādhīb were said to have estimated their economic and financial status and come to the conclusion that they were reasonably well-off and could afford to support themselves and those under their custody - their households, their students and their guests.⁽⁵⁾

Hence, according to their fatwa they were not entitled to

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1. See "The khalwa centre of al-Majādhīb at al-Dāmer", above.
 2. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer).
 3. Interview with 'Uthmān al-Azraq (al-Ṣūfī), 28th November, 1981.
 4. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer).
 5. Ibid.

receive or ask for zakāt, sadaqāt or nudhūr because they could not be counted among the eight categories of people specified in the Qur'ān as entitled to sadaqāt (alms):⁽¹⁾

"Alms are for the poor and the needy and those employed to administer (the funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God; and for the wayfarers: (Thus is it) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom."⁽²⁾

However, the khalwa traditional financial practices of the Funj period, described above, were disrupted by the Turco-Egyptian invasion of 1236/1821. The first years of the occupation seem to have had serious repercussion on the hitherto established system of khalwa education and more relevant on their traditional sources of financing, in particular.

The Funj sultans and their 'Abdallābi viceroys who were strong supporters of the khalwa Shaykhs and who often extended a generous hand to them, as has been illustrated above, were now deposed by the new regime. Unbelievably onerous taxation on wealth and property, which was said to have almost

1. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer).

2. Qur'ān, 9:60.

amounted to confiscation was said to have been imposed⁽¹⁾ thus reducing to a great extent the traditional voluntary contribution of the well-to-do among the masses towards the costs of khalwa education.

As an illustration of the heavy taxes imposed by the Turco-Egyptian regime the following rates were charged:⁽²⁾

Fifteen riyāls (or dollars)⁽³⁾ were put on every head of slave;

ten riyāls on every head of cattle; and

five riyāls on every sheep or donkey.

The effect of these heavy taxes on khalwas seems to have been reflected in the fact that the burden of such taxation was to fall on the settled people of the riverain villages,⁽⁴⁾ who also seem to have been charged with land tax.⁽⁵⁾ And as has been referred to earlier, the riverain lands were the very region in which almost all of the main khalwa centres were flourishing.⁽⁶⁾

1. Holt and Daly, p.54.

2. MacMichael, vol.II, p.387.

3. Holt and Daly, p.54.

4. Ibid.

5. Shibayka, p.132.

6. See *Appendix I*, for the geographical spread of the main khalwa centres,

In particular, according to Holt, taxation on slaves would have far-reaching social and political repercussions, for it would jeopardize the livelihood of all but the very poor families, since slaves were universally employed in the households and in the fields,⁽¹⁾ and were often used by the Ṣūfī Shaykhs at their khalwa centres to help in serving guests.⁽²⁾

Further, the Turco-Egyptian regime was reported to have followed a policy of repression to force the people to pay such taxes. For example, when some of the riverain people abandoned their region and started to flee to the Ethiopian borders, they were reported to have been pursued by the Government troops and shot down⁽³⁾ in heaps.⁽⁴⁾

At any rate, opposition to the Turco-Egyptian occupation and the onerous taxes was building up among the people of the riverain lands and seems to have been consolidated by the religio-political stand of al-Majādhīb of al-Dāmer who were said to have issued a fatwa opposing the regime on the grounds that it was not following the Sharī'a law but rather imposing a secular law instead.⁽⁵⁾

1. Holt and Daly, op. cit., p.54.

2. See references to such phenomenon, above.

3. Holt and Daly, p.58.

4. MacMichael, vol.II, p.392.

5. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer).

Consequently, the revolution broke out and Ismā'īl Pasha b. Muhammad 'Alī, the conqueror of Sennar, was murdered at Shendi (1238/1822) and the armed resistance flared all over the region.⁽¹⁾

The retaliation of the regime was swift and brutal. Muhammad Bey al-Dafterdar, Muhammad 'Alī's son-in-law, who was invading Kordufān at the time, was reported to have carried out a series of brutal punitive campaigns in revenge all over the riverain region causing devastation of property, ruin of the country and much bloodshed.⁽²⁾

In the course of such havoc almost all of the once famous khalwa centres of the region were said to have been destroyed,⁽³⁾ many of the fakīs fell, and many others abandoned the riverain region in mass-scale migration to Eastern Sudan, as did al-Majādhīb⁽⁴⁾, and to the Ethiopian marshes such as al-'Arakiyyīn under al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rayyah,⁽⁵⁾ or to Kordufan as did the peasants of Dongola region.⁽⁶⁾

To make things worse, as alluded to before, the country was said to have been stricken at the time by a drought and an

1. Holt and Daly, p.55.

2. MacMichael, vol.II, p.338.

3. See "developments under the Turco-Egyptian Period".

4. See al-Majādhīb khalwa centre, at al-Dāmer.

5. Holt and Daly, p.60.

6. Shibayka, p.132.

epidemic of smallpox;⁽¹⁾ and consequently half the population was reported to have perished by the sword and sickness and famine.⁽²⁾

As could be seen, as a result of the catastrophies and calamities associated with the Turco-Egyptian occupation of the Sudan, the khalwa seems to have suffered heavily - disruption of established system, destruction and dislocation of premises and, above all, loss of its traditional sources of income.

When the turmoil subsided and conditions seem to have returned to normal, the Turco-Egyptian regime was said to have induced the people to resume their traditional life.⁽³⁾

As far as khalwa education was concerned, the regime was reported to have adopted a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the khalwa.⁽⁴⁾

However, on the financial aspect of khalwa education, (though the needs of the khalwas, as described above, were generally and relatively simple) now, under the Turco-Egyptian rule, stripped of almost all their principal traditional

1. MacMichael, vol.II, p.392.

2. Ibid.

3. See developments under "Turco-Egyptian Period".

4. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, pp.13-14.

financial sources,⁽¹⁾ the khalwa Shaykhs found themselves forced to rely more and more for survival on grants-in-aid paid on requests submitted by the individual khalwa teachers to the provincial governors in the Sudan, and had to be approved by Muḥammad 'Alī and his successors in Cairo.⁽²⁾

These aids made by the Turco-Egyptian administration to a substantial number of khalwas came in the form of renovation of khalwa buildings - by provision of building materials and cash - and in the form of maintaining the khalwa teachers and their students, by provision of dura (grain) and cash.

To substantiate the above, the following examples could be cited. One of the early financial assistance paid to mosque and khalwa teachers in the Sudan, on their request, seems to have been that made by Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha himself. In response to a request made by the khalwa teachers of Kutranj to the Hikmdār or Governor of the Sudan who submitted it to the ruler of Egypt, the Khedive approved the grant of PT. 8,000 for the building of a wall and ten rooms of red brick as hostels for the students of Kutranj.⁽³⁾

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1. The khalwa Shaykhs could still obtain limited contributions from their village communities and services of their students and get some money from sales of amulets.
 2. See below, examples of aid on request.
 3. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III (document 10, file no.48), p.74.

Muhammad 'Alī was said to have encouraged the Sudanese to join al-Azhar in Egypt - and to help them in this respect he was reported to have responded positively in 1263/1846 to a request made by the Sudanese students - Muhammad 'Ali Widā'a and his colleagues - and established a riwāq (a student hostel) for the students of Sennar, similar to those allocated to students of the other nationalities studying in Egypt.⁽¹⁾

The riwāq of the Sennārī students was said to have been endowed with food, at the rate of fifty six loaves per day for its twelve students, then, and eight of them for their Shaykh.⁽²⁾

A similar riwāq had already been allocated for the students of Dār-Fūr.⁽³⁾

The successors of Muhammad 'Alī Pasha were said to have continued encouraging the traditional system of Islamic education exemplified in the mosques and khalwas.⁽⁴⁾

Under 'Abbās I (1264/1848 - 1270/1854), however, the first-ever government school, the Khartoum primary school, under Rifā'a al-Tahtāwī was opened in 1269/1853, but continued for one year and was closed by his successor.⁽⁵⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III (document 8), p.74.

2. Ibid., vol.II, p.20.

3. Ibid.

4. See below.

5. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.II, p.35.

Sa'īd Pasha (1270/1854 - 1279/1863) was reported to have aided the khalwas and their teachers, as was illustrated by his order to the Governor of Kordufān in 1273, to exempt the sāqiyas (water-wheels) and cultivation lands of al-Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Walī from taxation, so as to help him maintain his khalwa of study and his students of the Qur'ān.⁽¹⁾

The greatest concern and financial support for the khalwas and their teachers under the Turco-Egyptian regime, however, were said to have happened during the reign of the Khedive Ismā'īl (1279/1863 - 1296-1879).⁽²⁾

Reference could be made in this respect, for example, to the requests for aid submitted through the Governors of the Sudan to the Khedive Ismā'īl, by the following:

- The khalīfa 'Abd al-Rahmān who was in charge of the mosque of al-Arbāb in Khartoum - which was devoted to the teaching of the Qur'ān and 'ilm - and which required renovation at the cost of P.T. 4,693.⁽³⁾

The Khedive responded positively in 12 Rabi' al-Awwal, 1280, ordering that the mosque-khalwa be renovated at the expense of the government.⁽⁴⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.117.

2. Ibid., p.157.

3. Ibid., p.158.

4. Ibid., p.160.

- Al-fakī Yāsīn, khalīfa of the saint Muḥammad b. Arbāb at al-Bashaqra requesting, also, the renovation of that ancient mosque-khalwa.⁽¹⁾

The Egyptian ruler approved of the cost of the renovation, estimated at P.T.5241, on 27th Ramadān, 1280.⁽²⁾

Another example of the financial aid on request of the Khedive Ismā'īl to the khalwa teachers in the Sudan, was the approval of a monthly grant of P.T.400 made to al-fakī Khalafallāh of al-Kitayyāb, Zaydāb district of Berber province.⁽³⁾ Al-fakī Khalafallāh had had a tax-free fifty acres of land to cultivate in order to maintain his khalwa students of one hundred and fifty learners, of whom fifty seven were out-of-village students.⁽⁴⁾

However, later, on 8th of Shawwāl 1280 he submitted a request to the Khedive complaining that the previous grant of land was inadequate for the maintenance of his student population which was found by the Turco-Egyptian authorities in the Sudan to have grown to 172 students of the Qur'ān and 53 students of 'ilm. Except for 25 students who were living with their parents, almost all of them were living at the expense of al-fakī Khalafallāh.⁽⁵⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.161.

2. Ibid., p.162.

3. Ibid., pp.164-5.

4. Ibid., p.163.

5. Ibid.

The Khedive responded on 3 Dhū al-Ḥijja 1280 by granting him a monthly grant-in-aid of P.T.400 in addition to the fifty acres of land grant in order to help him maintain his family and his students.⁽¹⁾

Also, in response to a request submitted by the Turco-Egyptian administration on 28 Dhū al-Ḥijja, 1280, on behalf of three of the outstanding khalwa teachers: al-faqīh Badawī Abū Safiyya and al-Sayyid al-Makki b. al-Shaykh Ismā'īl - both from Kordufān, and al-Shaykh Muḥammad Tawm of the district of Sennar and Fazughli, for a financial aid for each of these dedicated teachers in order to help him maintain himself and his students who exceeded a hundred learners,⁽²⁾ the Khedive ordered that they be granted financial aid and dura (grain) like other teachers of similar conditions.⁽³⁾

Al-faqīh Sirāj al-Dīn b. Yaḥyā, the imām of the mosque and the teacher of thirty students at the mosque-khalwa of Umm Shanqa, requested the continuation of the concession - of collecting the revenue of five villages - that had been granted to him by the ex-Fur sultans, to enable him maintain himself and his students.⁽⁴⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, pp.164-5.

2. Ibid., p.165.

3. Ibid., pp.166-7.

4. Ibid., p.190 (file no.5).

The Khedive approved the request of the Hikimdar on 15 Sha'bān, 1291.⁽¹⁾

Due to the sympathetic responses to the requests of the khalwa teachers and the material aid they received from the Khedive it seems to have encouraged more and more teachers to apply for aid on which they seem to have relied for living.

However, it was realized that it was not only the genuine teachers in charge of khalwas of study who requested grants, but even pretenders seem to have done so.⁽²⁾

To combat such a trend the Khedive was reported to have approved a scheme proposed and carried out by his governor in the Sudan, Maẓhar Pasha, in 1283/1867, to inspect khalwa teachers in order to make sure that the financial and material grants were provided only to genuine teachers of khalwas and to stop such aid from those who were not entitled to it.⁽³⁾

Eventually, towards the end of the reign of Ismā'īl Pasha the financial and dura aid was reported to have been stopped from the khalwa fakīs and replaced by grants of small land holdings to be cultivated by the khalwa teachers, for the maintenance of their khalwas.⁽⁴⁾

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.190 (file no.2).

2. Ibid., p.189.

3. Ibid., vol.II, pp.63-5.

4. See below, in the section.

This change of policy seems to have prompted a series of protests to the Khedive in Egypt from the ex-financially-aided khalwa teachers, such as al-Shaykh al-Amīn Muḥammad Khūjalī and al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abdallāh Khūjalī who were both khalwa teachers at al-Ghubush, Berber.⁽¹⁾ They used to receive financial aid and dura at the rate of P.T.400 and six ardab of dura, monthly, for al-Shaykh al-Amīn Muḥammad Khūjalī and his khalwa students, and P.T.250 and four ardab dura for the maintenance of al-Shaykh Muḥammad Abdallāh Khūjalī and his khalwa, according to the grant of the Khedive Ismā‘īl, of 22nd Jumāda al-A ḡla 1282 A.H.⁽²⁾ However, by 1291 they seem to have appealed to the Khedive against the decision to stop their monthly financial grants and aid of dura, and their replacement by a grant of cultivation land.⁽³⁾

Similar appeals were submitted to the Khedive from the khalwa teachers: al-Mahdī Muṣṭafa - imām of the zāwiyah (khalwa) at Berber, and al-Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Majdhūb, one of the ‘ulamā’ and a khalwa teacher at Berber, who both had their financial aid and dura replaced by land grants by 1291.⁽⁴⁾

The Turco-Egyptian authorities in the Sudan and Egypt were

1. See "khalwa centre of al-Ghubush", above.

2. ‘Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.172.

3. Ibid., p.187.

4. Ibid., (letter no. 9), p.187.

reported to have ignored such appeals and enforced their policy of granting the khalwa teachers pieces of land to cultivate and live on their crops, instead of relying on the government's aid for maintenance.⁽¹⁾ The exception, however, were the disabled such as blind teachers.⁽²⁾

Hence, it was reported that by the end of the reign of Ismā'īl Pasha - and indeed towards the end of the Turco-Egyptian rule - the government's aid was almost virtually withheld from khalwas and the khalwa teachers in effect had to depend on their traditional means for financing their institutions.⁽³⁾

In reference to the traditional practices towards khalwas, in this respect, Shuqayr writes:

"The school of the Qur'ān - the khalwa - was either established by a ḥāfīz of the Qur'ān (a fakī) at his home, where he taught learners and expended on them by himself for the sake of God; or it was established by a man of charity at his home, where he would hire a fakī at fixed pay and spend on him and the learners from his purse; or built and financed through the joint effort of all the inhabitants of the village who would

1. 'Abd al-Majīd, vol.III, p.189.

2. Ibid., p.188.

3. Ibid., vol.II, p.71.

establish it in the form of a room adjacent to the mosque."⁽¹⁾

As could be realized from the general survey of the financing of khalwa education during the Turco-Egyptian period (1236/1821 - 1302/1885) at its beginning the khalwas were deprived of their traditional sources of finance, and towards its end they were virtually denied the government's vital material aid.⁽²⁾

In view of such a critical financial situation, the khalwa Shaykhs and fakīs were said to have turned more than ever to the meagre contribution of their followers in the village communities and above all to the utilization and sale of their (spiritual) services to those who believed in their baraka - i.e., earning income through visitations of their followers to the qubbas of their ancestors, by means of nudhūr, sadaqāt and by the sale of amulets, 'azīma or talismans.⁽³⁾

Under the Mahdiyya (1302/1885 - 1316/1898) as alluded to above, the top priority was given to jihād, first to bring the revolution to victory against the corrupt Turco-Egyptian administration, and then to consolidate the Khālifa's rule against internal and external threats.⁽⁴⁾ Hence, education and its institutions do not seem to have figured high during that

1. Shuqayr, vol.I, p.140.

2. See traditional sources of financing khalwa education under the Funj rule.

3. Interview with al-Naqar (al-Dāmer).

4. See developments under the Mahdiyya Rule", above.

period.

Nevertheless, as far as the financing of education was concerned and in line with the Mahdī's teachings, the Sūfī orders, saint-cult and rituals associated with them - such as visitations to qubbas and the Sūfī Shaykh, writing and sale of amulets, ʿazīma, talismans, etc., all were utterly banned.⁽¹⁾ In effect, the khalwa teachers who were not engaged in actual jihād by joining the Mahdiyya armies, seem to have been in a state of (jihād) teaching the children - contented with the minimum essential for living, relying on themselves and the support of their village communities.⁽²⁾

However, as alluded to before, the financial support of the hundreds of khalwas in Omdurman - like the Mahdiyya armies - were said to have been provided for by the State.⁽³⁾

At any rate, the Mahdiyya period was a short one and both the Government and the whole people were preoccupied with the jihād and almost all financial resources were devoted to it.⁽⁴⁾

1. See al-Mahdī's teachings, above.

2. Interview with Shaykh Muḥammad al-Fakī 'Umar at Tayba, Qurashī, 21st November, 1981.

3. See the situation under al-Khalīfa 'Abdallāhi, above.

4. Interview with the uncle of the khalīfa of Kadabās, 15th November, 1981.

Under the Condominium rule (1898-1955) the first two decades, as referred to above, were devoted to security and order;⁽¹⁾ hence, the activities of all traditional institutions in the Sudan were said to have been viewed through that context.

Accordingly, the activities of the Sūfī Orders and Mahdism were strictly banned and the attitude towards the traditional institution of education the khalwa and towards its teachers seems to have been unsympathetic and even hostile.⁽²⁾ Not only that, but the Government created a rival institution of education - the kuttāb or the elementary school - to eventually replace the khalwa. The Government's design seems to have been a process of a gradual and systematic liquidation of khalwas for which purpose the financial aid would be used as an effective means.

When the Government created the modern kuttāb school it provided it with better material facilities and better qualified teachers - all paid for by the Government,⁽³⁾ whereas the hundreds of traditional khalwas which were reported to have been existing at the time⁽⁴⁾ were totally ignored.

However, to induce some of the khalwas to introduce new subjects in their curricula - such as arithmetic - limited monthly allowances of L.E.2-6 were paid to selected teachers.⁽⁵⁾

1. Griffiths, p.5.
2. Bashīr, p.30.
3. Currie, pp.4-5.
4. Bashīr, p.30.
5. Ibid.

As could be seen from the table above, mainly through provision of financial assistance the Government seems to have extended its control, effectively, over traditional khalwas by succeeding in transforming them into semi-schools - into khalwas nizāmiyya or assisted khalwas.

The number of such khalwas rose steadily from 6 (in 1918) embracing 200 learners, to 400 assisted khalwas (in 1927) including 13,077 and reached their peak of 786 (1931) holding 29,356 learners.⁽¹⁾

As alluded to above, hitherto the Government was using the khalwa nizāmiyya as a substitute for the first year class of the kuttāb school which had been abolished.⁽²⁾

However, when by the end of 1930, the Government reversed its previous policy of using the khalwa as a feeder to the kuttāb (as a substitute to first year elementary school) and started the withdrawal of its grants-in-aid from assisted khalwas on the pretext of the academic failure of the khalwa nizāmiyya,⁽³⁾ the number of these dramatically decreased - from 786 in 1931, to 560 in 1939, to 178 in 1945 and to 104 in 1950.⁽⁴⁾

1. See table, no.1.

2. RFACS, (1928), p.93.

3. See 'Conditions of khalwas under the "Condominium Period".
above.

4. See the table, above, n.1.

Not only that but the assisted khalwas seem to have been practically replaced by the elementary schools - the kuttāb, and the three-year semi-elementary or subgrade school that came into being in 1934,⁽¹⁾ and gained great popularity in the country, then, as could be evidenced from the table.⁽²⁾

As for the traditional khalwas - that is those unassisted (by the Government) - they were said to have been relying for living (for the teachers and students) on their traditional sources.⁽³⁾ They seem to have depended mainly, during the Condominium period, on cultivation of land by the fakī and his students and followers, on donations from the Sūfī followers (when the Government allowed the traditional activities of the Sūfī orders) and on revenues derived from rituals of saint-cult - visitations to the qubbas and Shaykhs, sales of amulets, 'azīma, and so on.⁽⁴⁾

However, these traditional khalwas, with their meagre resources, could not compete with Government-supported modern elementary schools - the four-year elementary and the three-year subgrade. This was so because of the Government's policy of making the school education - and not that of the traditional

1. See Conditions of khalwas under the "Condominium Period".

2. See table no.I, above.

3. Interview with al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Dūsūqī, khalīfa of the masīd at Tayba Qurashī, December, 1981; and with ustādh 'Alī at Kadabās, November, 1981.

4. See the reference to these rituals, above.

institutions (mosques and khalwas) - the recognized qualification for entry into modern sector employment, as referred to above.⁽¹⁾ Hence, parents in Northern and Central Sudan were said to have been steadily attracted by the modern school and, in effect, shifted their children away from the khalwas.

Thus abandoned, by the end of the Condominium rule, the overwhelming majority of the traditional khalwas seem to have faded out in Northern and Central Sudan - the region where such khalwas were once the dominant feature.⁽²⁾

Nevertheless, some Sūfī khalwas managed to survive in these regions;⁽³⁾ however, the majority of the khalwas that continued to flourish under the Condominium period, as alluded to above, were in Western Sudan⁽⁴⁾ especially in Dārḡūr province - dependent entirely on their traditional sources: cultivation by the fakī and his students and sales of talismans, but not on Sūfism which was said to have been rarely practised there.⁽⁵⁾

1. See conditions of khalwas under the "Condominium Period" pp.156-7, above.

2. See "Sites of khalwa centres under the Funj period, above.

3. Reference could be made to khalwas of Kadabās, Abū Qurūn, Tayba, Umm Dawwan Bān, Wad al-Fādī.

4. See above.

5. Interview with al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Majīd Ismā'īl, November, 1981.

In sharp contrast to the unsympathetic and even hostile attitude of the Condominium rule (1898-1955) towards the traditional khalwas as alluded to above,⁽¹⁾ the National rule (since Independence, 1956) seems to have been increasingly sympathetic, encouraging and supportive - morally and financially.⁽²⁾

As a result, the country, under National rule, has been witnessing a general trend of khalwa revival, especially in the eastern and western regions of the country, as was evidenced by the surveys, alluded to above and which indicated the existence of probably about three thousand khalwas in the Sudan today - 65% of which are in Western Sudan.⁽³⁾

On the financial aspect of khalwa education, with which we are more concerned in this section, in addition to recourse to the traditional sources of financing and upkeeping the khalwas, the khalwa Shaykhs and teachers seem to have been receiving increasing Government material and financial aid.

One of the first concerns of the Department of Religious Affairs, when it came into being at the dawn of Independence in

1. See Condition of khalwas under "National Rule", above.

2. Ibid.

3. See p.180, above.

1956, was to provide financial help to some of the khalwas from its modest funds.⁽¹⁾

When the agency of ihyā' nār al-Qur'ān was created in 1956, main among its objectives were "...the provision of adequate technical supervision and financial aid to functioning khalwas";⁽²⁾ and "provision of prizes to those khalwa learners who memorize the Qur'ān by heart."⁽³⁾

In order to control the financial aid khalwas were classified by the Agency of ihyā' nār al-Qur'ān into four categories - on the basis of their student population and whether they were boarding or non-boarding, and whether maintained by the individual khalwa Shaykhs or by the local community.⁽⁴⁾

The grants-in-aid which were paid to the khalwas through the regional inspectorates were in accordance with the following classification:

Category I khalwas: These were boarding khalwas, holding large student population and maintained by the khalwa Shaykh.⁽⁵⁾ The financial aid to be received by each khalwa of this category

1. Hamad al-Nīl, p.59.

2. Tārīkh al-Qur'ān, p.25.

3. Ibid., pp.25-6.

4. See classification, below.

5. NUR, pp.19-20.

was L.S.40-60 annually. However, some khalwas of this category, such as Abū Qurūn, Umm Dawwan Bān, Abū Ṣālih and al-Shilaykha, used to receive L.S.120 each per annum.⁽¹⁾

Category II khalwas: These were boarding khalwas, each embracing a large student population but maintained by a group of people. The aid to be received by each such khalwa was L.S.30 annually.

Category III khalwas: These were non-boarding khalwas, each of which used to receive L.S.15 only, annually.

Category IV khalwas: These were small pre-school, day khalwas which used to receive L.S.15 each per annum.⁽²⁾

Although the Government seems to have been giving only ^{not} nominal financial aid to the khalwa teachers, yet it was/extended to all khalwa teachers. By 1976 only 43% of the existing khalwas were reported to have received such aid.⁽³⁾

By 1979, the monthly khalwa allowances seem to have been slightly increased to an average monthly payment of L.S. 5.5 per teacher.⁽⁴⁾ In addition, the Government aid by that year was reported to have been extended to 85% of the existing khalwas

1. Nūr, p.19.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.20.

4. NCSW, p.10; p.40 (tables 20 and 21).

at that time.⁽¹⁾

In 1981 and in order to cope with the high inflation, the annual grants seem to have been replaced by, relatively, much increased monthly salaries to the fakis - at the rate of L.S.28 per month, each.⁽²⁾

In addition to the above, the State, exemplified in the ex-President and the regional governors, used to provide khalwas and their fakis with aid in cash and/or kind when an official visit to the khalwas took place.⁽³⁾

As to the foundation of khalwas, the Government's contribution was reported to have been only about 5%⁽⁴⁾ - hence the khalwa still remained as a private enterprise. According to the survey of the Education Sector Review of 1976, 95% of the khalwas were established through private effort (86% by individuals and 9% by groups of people).⁽⁵⁾

1. NCSW, p.10.

2. Department of Religious Affairs, al Fasher, Payroll No. A/Sh/D/56/A/1 dated 21 Ramadān, 1401/22/7/1981.

3. On two visits to the khalwa of Hamishkorayb the President was said to have provided the khalwa with dura - of 5,000 and 3,000 sacks respectively - as aid to the khalwa (see the khalwa of Hamishkorayb, above. In 1981, December, the Regional Governor gave the khalwas he visited aid in cash: L.S.7,000.

4. Nūr, p.16.

5. Ibid.

As a practical manifestation of the State's encouragement and support to the khalwa teachers and learners to increase their efforts in teaching and learning the Qur'ān, the President, since 1394/1974, used to allocate an annual money prize to be offered at the Qur'ān Festivals to the top successful reciters amongst the competitors.⁽¹⁾

It is worth mentioning here that the khalwa teachers, too, used to have their share in the President's prize. In recognition of their efforts and proficiency in teaching the Qur'ān, those khalwa teachers whose students were among the successful candidates were paid money incentives, at the rate of L.S.15 for each winning reciter he had taught.⁽²⁾

In addition, the Qur'ān teachers of the top twenty khalwas - in terms of participants in the Qur'ān festivals - would be invited to attend the Qur'ān festivals in Khartoum, where they would be received by the President, and granted the sum of L.S.100 each.⁽³⁾

Perhaps the significance of the President's prize, aside from its material value, lies in its moral support, it seems.

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1. See "Regulations of the President's Prize", below.
 2. See "Regulations..." (8a), below.
 3. See "Regulations..." (8b), below.

Table VII: Khalwa Competitors and Prizes at the
Annual Festivals of the Qur'ān
For the Years 1394/1974 - 1398/1977

I	The First Festival (1st Muharram, 1394/24 January 1974)	
a)	Number of candidates	526
b)	Successful candidates at the Provincial levels	347
c)	Selected candidates for Khartoum Festival	88
d)	The winning reciters of the Festival	40
e)	The President's Prize was	LS 10,000
II	The Second Festival (1st Muharram, 1395/13 January 1975)	
a)	Number of applicants	538
b)	Successful candidates at the Provincial level	390
c)	Selected candidates for Khartoum Festival	122
d)	The winning reciters of the Festival	40
e)	The President's Prize was	LS 10,000
III	The Third Festival (1st Muharram, 1396/2 January 1976)	
a)	Number of applicants	658
b)	Successful candidates at Provincial level	390
c)	Selected candidates for Khartoum Festival	126
d)	The winning reciters of the Festival	40
e)	The President's Prize was	LS 20,000
IV	The Fourth Festival (1st Muharram, 1397/ December 1976)	
a)	Number of applicants	909
b)	Successful candidates at Provincial level	715
c)	Selected candidates for Khartoum Festival	169
d)	The winning reciters of the Festival	80
e)	The President's Prize was	LS 40,000
V	The Fifth Festival (1st Muharram, 1398/ December 1977)	
a)	Number of applicants	1,608
b)	Successful candidates at Provincial level	830
c)	Selected candidates for Khartoum Festival	303
d)	The winning reciters of the Festival	120
e)	The President's Prize was	LS 50,000

Source: Compiled from al-Mahrajān

With the steady increase in the number of successful reciters of the Qur'ān - an indication of the popular response to the trend of khalwa revival and return to the Qur'ān - it seems the President responded by increasing his annual prize to the competitors from L.S. 10,000 in 1394/1974, to L.S. 20,000 in 1396/December 1975, to L.S. 50,000 in 1398/December, 1977, to L.S. 100,000 1403/1983 and in 1404/1984 to L.S. 200,000.⁽¹⁾

1. Akhbār al-‘Ālam al-Islāmī

12 Jamād al-Aūla, 1404 - 13th February, 1984

(Interview with President Numayri by the Weekly Arabic, in Khartoum).

Regulations of the President's Prize for Reciters of the Qur'ān⁽¹⁾

- 1(a) Any Sudanese, of not more than forty years of age, who memorizes the whole of the Qur'ān, or two or three parts (in the case of students and women) is entitled to participate in the competition for the prize.
- (b) Those interested should contact the Regional Director for Religious Affairs and Endowments in their province, so as to fill in the special application form.
- 2(a) Teachers of the Qur'ān at the institutes and reciters at Broadcasting and Television stations are not allowed to participate in the competition.
- (b) No citizen is allowed to compete in more than one province.
- (c) The applicants should state on the form whether he would compete for the whole of the Qur'ān, or two or three parts of it.
3. Categories of competitors:
 - (a) The first category: those of ages 7 - 15 years.
 - (b) The second category: those of ages 16 - 20 years.
 - (c) The third category: those of ages 21 - 30 years
 - (d) The fourth category: those of ages 31 - 40 years.

1. Source: al-Mahrajān, pp. 72-5.

4. Provincial Tests Committees for Selection of Competitors
[for the Khartoum Festival]:

- (a) The Test committee should be headed by the Regional Director for Religious Affairs and Endowments, or by his deputy.
- (b) If there exists an Institute for Qur'ānic Studies in the Province, one of its teachers should be chosen as a member of the Tests Committee.
- (c) The chairman of the Committee should choose a third member to his committee from the hāfiẓ of the Qur'ān in the province.
- (d) Each member will be granted a remuneration of L.S.25 (twenty five pounds Sudanese).

5. Timetable of Tests (for 1397/1977):

- (a) The preliminary tests in the provinces start on Saturday, 17th Dhū al-Qa'da 1397/29th October 1977 and end on Monday 26th Dhū al-Qa'da . 1397, 7th October 1977 [i.e. the Provincial tests continue for 10 days].
- (b) The final tests of successful candidates of the provinces for the Khartoum Festival start at the premises of Religious Studies in Khartoum on Wednesday, 19th Dhū al-Qa'ida 1397/30th November 1977 and end on Wednesday, 26th Dhū al-Hijja 1397/7th December 1977 [i.e. the final tests in Khartoum continue for a week].

6. Successful hāfiz from the provinces coming to Khartoum for the final tests:

(a) The regional director for Religious Affairs in each province should send to Khartoum a list of the top successful candidates, for each of the four age-groups, at an early date, so as to be endorsed for the final competition.

(b) Each competitor coming from the provinces will be paid travel allowance to and from his home.

(c) Each hāfiz competitor will receive the sum of L.S.15 pounds for those coming from the provinces and L.S.10 for those from Khartoum, for living and accommodation expenses while attending the final competition tests in Khartoum.

7. Prizes of successful hāfiz in the Final Competition Test
[for the Khartoum Festival]

(a) At the Final Competition Test the top thirty hāfiz, of each of the four age-groups, are sorted out, thus making the number of the best reciters of the Festival 120 hāfiz (for 1397/1977).

(b) Prizes are distributed amongst them according to their categories.

8. Other Rewards of Encouragement:

- (a) The khalwa fakīs (teachers) or their successors, from whose khalwas successful candidates were chosen, are paid the amount of L.S.15 pounds against each chosen hāfiz
- (b) The teachers of the top twenty khalwas in the competitions of the Qur'ān in the previous festivals are invited to attend the Khartoum Festival, where they would be received by the President, and each granted an encouragement reward of L.S.100 pounds in appreciation and recognition of their role in the preservation of the Qur'ān.

As could be seen from the above, the Government's financial contribution to the khalwas and their teachers, though as a constant guaranteed source of income was vital, yet it was too little to support the fakī and his family. Moreover, in view of the ever-rising cost of living in the Sudan, the khalwa teachers still depend largely on the traditional sources of income to maintain their khalwas, students and themselves.

These traditional private sources of income and contribution towards the khalwa costs of education have been exemplified in the following:

- a) Donations from the individuals and groups, such as men of charity. For example⁽¹⁾ the Sudanese businessman - Masarra - in

1. Similar impressive renovations were accomplished through donations at Tayba, Abu Qurūn and Umm Dawwan Bān.

1980 was said to have built at the khalwa of Wad' al-Fādnī (Gezira) at his own expense, four large student hostels - each hostel consisting of five spacious rooms, each of a capacity of accommodating twenty learners - all with their verandahs and built of red brick.⁽¹⁾

Another example of khalwa sources of income was the rare phenomenon of rich endowments enjoyed by the khalwa of Kadabās,⁽²⁾ and which are exemplified in agricultural schemes, houses (for rent) and shops in the main towns and in the capital - all said to have been endowed by the Sūfī followers of al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī and his descendants.⁽³⁾

In addition to the above, the followers of the Shaykh always donated generously in cash and in kind, and in labour. One of their significant contributions to the khalwa has been the special quarter of jālūs (mud) houses originally established by the followers of al-Shaykh al-Ja'alī for their seasonal visitation. However, since their period of stay (and their families') in these furnished premises was usually short (i.e. days), the quarter has been used, in effect, almost throughout

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1. See the khalwa centre of Wal al-Fādnī, above, for the elaborate material renovations whose costs were donated by the khalwa followers.
 2. See the khalwa of Kadabās, above.
 3. Information from ustādh ⁶Alī, brother of the khalwa khalīfa of Kadabās, November, 1981.

the year as student hostels - or khalwas of accommodation.⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, the khalwa of Kadabās seems to have been one of the most materially prosperous khalwas in the Sudan.

In addition to his monthly salary from the Department of Religious Affairs, the Qur'ān teacher at the khalwa used to receive material assistance from the khalīfa, and through his long years of service (of over forty years) at the khalwa he seems to have grown rich, too, owning a farm and cattle.⁽²⁾

Hence, as could be realized, there seems to have been no problem of living at the Sūfī-supported khalwa of Kadabās. A glance at the expenditure aspect would illustrate the point. In addition to the cost of the great material improvement and maintenance of the elaborate khalwa buildings as alluded to above,⁽³⁾ the khalwa's large student population was provided with free accommodation, food rations - flour, meat, cooking oil, spices, sugar, tea and vegetables.⁽⁴⁾

Not only that, but all the needy learners were provided with new clothes, twice a year and even with pocket money too.⁽⁵⁾

1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī (Kadabās).

2. Ibid.

3. See the Khalwa Centre of Kadabās, above.

4. Interview with ustādh 'Alī (Kadabās).

5. Ibid.

In all this, the khalwa of Kadabās was said to have been almost dependent on its own revenues and generous donations of its followers.⁽¹⁾

Another present day khalwa which was said to have been dependent almost entirely on donations and support of its followers was the famous Sūfī khalwa Centre of Umm Dawwan Bān.⁽²⁾ As could be indicated by the impressive renovation of buildings of the khalwa Centre, it seems to have had considerable financial resources. To further substantiate that, in 1981 the khalwa was embracing about five hundred and fifty hayrān whom it used to maintain - providing them, in addition to education, with accommodation, meals and clothes for the needy - all for free.⁽³⁾

Not only the students, but also the teachers and other deputies and personnel working at the khalwa were reported to have enjoyed such privileges, and more, as could be evidenced by the seasonal clothes they received and the daily rations of food assigned to individual members of the personnel, as illustrated below:⁽⁴⁾

- Flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ kg. of fresh meat

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1. Interview with ustādh 'Alī (Kadabās).
 2. See above.
 3. Information from al-fakī Hasb al-Rasūl.
 4. Ibid.

- vegetables and salads
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of cooking oil
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ kg. of sugar and tea
- perfumes and soap (weekly)
- clothes for the fakī and members of his family - twice a year

The costs of all this and the maintenance of the khalwa complex were all paid for from the khalīfa's purse.⁽¹⁾

The khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, as a tradition, refrained from accepting Government aid, and had no endowments. Hence, as a Sūfī-dependent khalwa, it relied heavily on donations, zakāt and pious gifts from followers of the Shaykh (khalīfa).⁽²⁾

On their part the khalwa Shaykhs - especially the Sūfī Shaykhs - seem to have been deriving substantial revenues from the visitations of their followers, from pious gifts and bayād, against the sales of 'azīma, amulets, and so on,⁽³⁾ believed to cure a variety of ailments of their followers. For example, the khalwa Shaykhs of Kadabās⁽⁴⁾ and Umm Dawwan Bān⁽⁵⁾ seem to have acquired the reputation of curing, not only the mild complaints

1. Information obtained by the writer from al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl.

2. Ibid.

3. For more information on bayād, 'azīma, amulets, etc. see p.

4. See the khalwa of Kadabās, above.

5. See the khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān, above.

but even the serious cases of insanity. (1)

The students, too, seem to have made their contribution towards the maintenance of their khalwas and thus reducing the costs of education. The universal practice of the application of the monitorial system of instruction at almost all of the big khalwa centres in the Sudan has already been discussed⁽²⁾ - the hayrān of the khalwa were not only learners, but also shared in teaching their juniors.⁽³⁾

Further, as alluded to above, on certain occasions, such as al-Sharāfa's and the Wednesday karāma the students would collect from the families of the village grain and beans to cook as balīla and eat with their fakī.⁽⁴⁾

At the khalwas of al-Muhājirīn in Dārfūr, as alluded to above, the upkeep of the large student population at each khalwa

1. In his visits to both khalwas in November, 1981, the writer found a number of persons said to be mad brought by their relatives to the Shaykhs. At Kadabās these mad people were chained by the feet but were allowed to move about in the village and seem to have been harmless.
2. See "Methods of Learning", above.
3. Ibid.
4. This tradition seems to have been abandoned in Northern Sudan. However, it is still practised at the khalwas of Western Sudan - especially in Dārfūr. (Information from the khalwa Shaykh of Nāmī - al-Muhājirīn.)

camp seems to have been a serious problem to both the teachers and the students.⁽¹⁾

Unlike the situation at the big khalwa centres of the Sūfī Shaykhs of Northern and Central Sudan, here the khalwas and their teachers no longer received gifts or donations from the rulers or men of charity. Not only that, but even the zakāt was not paid to the khalwa Shaykhs.⁽²⁾ Further, these khalwas had no endowments, and the little monthly allowance paid by the Government to the teacher was too little to support even the fakī himself, let alone his family.⁽³⁾

Hence the khalwa fakīs have been encouraging their students al-muhājirīn to tour round the villages, three days a week, to ask for donations of food - grain, which they would share with their teacher and retain the remainder for their existence for the remaining days of the week.⁽⁴⁾

Moreover, the khalwa fakī of al-muhājirīn's camp used to employ his students to cultivate for him his farm - without sharing with them its produce of grain.⁽⁵⁾

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1. See the khalwa of al-muhājirīn at Nāmī, Dārḥūr.
 2. Interview with al-fakī 'Abd al-Mūlā Abū 'Ushar.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See the khalwa of al-muhājirīn at Nāmī, above.
 5. Ibid.

It should be noted here that making use of the khalwa student labour has been a traditional practice that has been handed down from the Funj era.⁽¹⁾ Today it is still practised at some of the khalwas in Northern Sudan, but here a considerable part of the return has been for the upkeep of the students themselves.⁽²⁾

The students seem also to have been paying nominal fees at some of the small village khalwas in Western Sudan, such as that of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā of al-Fāshir who used to charge every learner, at the stage of his first sharāfa, the small sum of P.T.50.⁽³⁾

Although the overwhelming majority of khalwas in the Sudan provided education, lodging and maintenance for free, a recent survey has revealed that about 20% of khalwa children paid nominal fees of P.T.10 - 50 per month to their teachers.⁽⁴⁾

Hence, from the above, it seems that the main sources of

-
1. See Contribution of students towards cost of khalwa education under the Funj Period, above.
 2. Information from the khalwa Shaykhs of Wad al-Maqbūl, Tayba and Wad al-Fādnī (see above).
 3. Information from al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsā at his khalwa, al-Fāshir, December, 1981.
 4. NCSW, op. cit., p.11.

financing khalwa education have been exemplified in:

- Government aid to khalwas, and teachers (in terms of salaries)
- Donations from supporters and followers of khalwas and their Shaykhs, i.e., from individuals and groups
- Revenues derived from endowments to khalwas
- Revenues derived from visitations and sale of amulets to followers of the Sūfī Shaykhs
- Labour and symbolic financial contributions from khalwa students.

CONCLUSIONS

Islamic education only really began in the Sudan with the emergence of the Funj kingdom of Sennar, in the early 10th/16th century. It was only then that favourable conditions were created for the arrival, settlement and work of the 'ulamā' who came from all parts of the Ṣūfī dominated Muslim lands.

Under the influence of Ṣūfism, which found in the Sudan an ideal climate to flourish in, the basic educational institution came to be known as the khalwa. The khalwa has remained a private charitable institution with its one Ṣūfī teacher, or successor(s) afterwards, in charge of administration, teaching and the upkeep of its unrestricted number of learners of all ages. Except for religious holidays it is open all day, all week and all the year round.

For its requirements of teaching aids, the khalwa has been entirely self-reliant, utilizing the local environment.

This institution was first and foremost an institution for learning the Qur'ān by heart. In order to attain this objective the students had to learn to read and write as a means to that end. In this process the text of the Qur'ān was used as the basic text-book.

An important by-product from this essentially religious operation has been that in this way literacy was attained by many

people.

After the basic stage of learning, the learning of the Qur'ān, there were more advanced khalwas for the study of further Islamic sciences - mainly fiqh, tawhīd, Sūfism, ahkam al-Qur'ān and tafsīr. These topics remained popular for a long time - perhaps an indication of the practical needs of the people at the time. Largely due to the scarcity of written material the method of learning followed here also depended heavily on rote learning.

The khalwa as an educational institution has continued up to the present day. Its methods, techniques and organization do not seem to have changed very much from the time of its institution.

There was a brief period of modification when the colonial administration in the Sudan early this century endeavoured to use the basic stage of the khalwa as a feeder to the newly established state system of education. To make the khalwa more efficient, new secular subjects were added to the curriculum, its teachers were exposed to training and inspection and paid salaries.

However, this came to an end because both parties were dissatisfied as their aims were different. Consequently, the khalwa declined in favour while the modern-sector employment orientated state system gained increasing popularity.

After Independence, in response to public demand and under a favourable attitude from the Government, Sūfī Shaykhs in Northern Sudan and the masses in the less developed regions of Western and Eastern Sudan have embarked on reviving the traditional khalwas - with the result that today there exists in the Sudan more than three thousand khalwas. However, almost all of these institutions have been revived on the same lines as in the past.

At present, despite the rhetoric of the Government and its repeatedly expressed supportive policies for introduction of reform into those institutions, no genuine change has been effected. Instead, the Government has been using the khalwa system to boost its own Islamic image before the public and also as a means to supplement its educational system.

The khalwas of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī at Hamishkorayb have demonstrated the exceptional qualities of the khalwa as an educational, religious and civilizing force and an effective agent of social reform in deprived areas - given a charismatic leadership such as that of al-Shaykh 'Alī Bitāī and the dedication and will of those around him to effect positive change.

There remains, then, the conflict between the modern educational system of the state with its secular orientation and the educational system employed in the khalwa with its all-pervading religious atmosphere and its reliance on rote learning.

Clearly there is a pressing need for the Government and those

responsible to embark on a comprehensive and drastic reform of this important traditional institution of learning while at the same time respecting the role it has played in the Sudan.

The khalwa must become more effective in its educational role in the different regions where it exists today and it must be more responsive to the needs of the people and the changes that take place in these regions if it is to survive.

In the Sudan today there are different patterns of khalwas. The first are the Sūfī supported khalwas of the riverain region of North and Central Sudan. These khalwas, as the study has revealed, have been revived in regions which have witnessed a relatively higher expansion in educational opportunities to the extent that almost all their children have access to schools. Hence, in effect, the traditional khalwas have been shunned as educational institutions by the people of their localities. If the khalwas are to serve the local population in these regions, they should be transformed into Islamic cultural centres that provide more than the traditional teaching of the Qur'ān. The khalwas should extend their roles to meeting the religious and social needs of the local population.

The second group of khalwas are in the region of Western Sudan. At the small village level, the village khalwa is the only educational institution. There the khalwa should be transformed on similar lines to what used to be known as the khalwa nizāmiyya - i.e., secular subjects such as Arabic,

arithmetic, hygiene and subjects of practical use to the environment should be added to the normal khalwa curriculum, with the necessary retraining of teachers and improvement of khalwa facilities. Such improvements in khalwa facilities should be accompanied by an effort to discourage the hijra to other khalwas as these students are so frequently exploited.

In places where there exists a primary school in the village, both institutions should be encouraged to coordinate their educational roles for the promotion of village life.

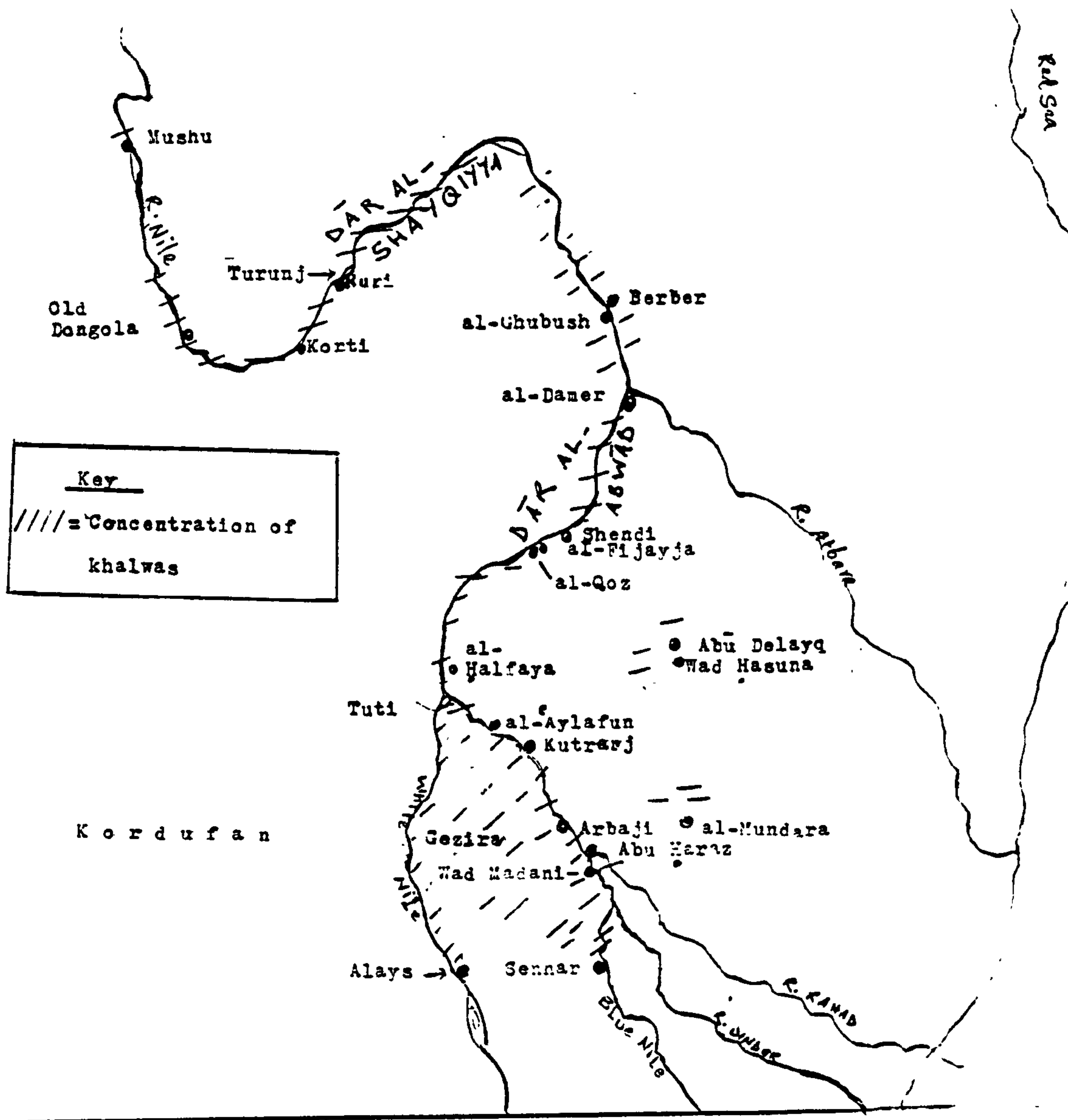
When each village khalwa is encouraged to develop as a "full-time" khalwa retaining all its learners, the source for al-muhājirīn khalwa, and indeed for the khalwas of the riverain region would be drastically reduced if not completely dried up. These could then become more advanced khalwas of study associated with al-ma'āhid al-'ilmiyya.

The third category is represented by the region of Hamishkorayb. There the khalwa is rendering an excellent comprehensive community service. It is to be hoped that this momentum is maintained. Whenever possible there, the school and the khalwa should be encouraged to play a complementary role. The khalwa for women, however, - being their only educational institution - needs urgent attention and reform. There is a pressing need for secular subjects, practices and training relevant to the promotion of women's life and childhood, to be added to the khalwa programmes.

The khalwa in the Sudan has always been an educational institution which has taught both the young and the adults. There is an urgent need for more adult literacy in the country - especially in the regions where the khalwa education is the main form of education. It would be extremely advantageous if this institution could be developed to help in this area.

Appendix I

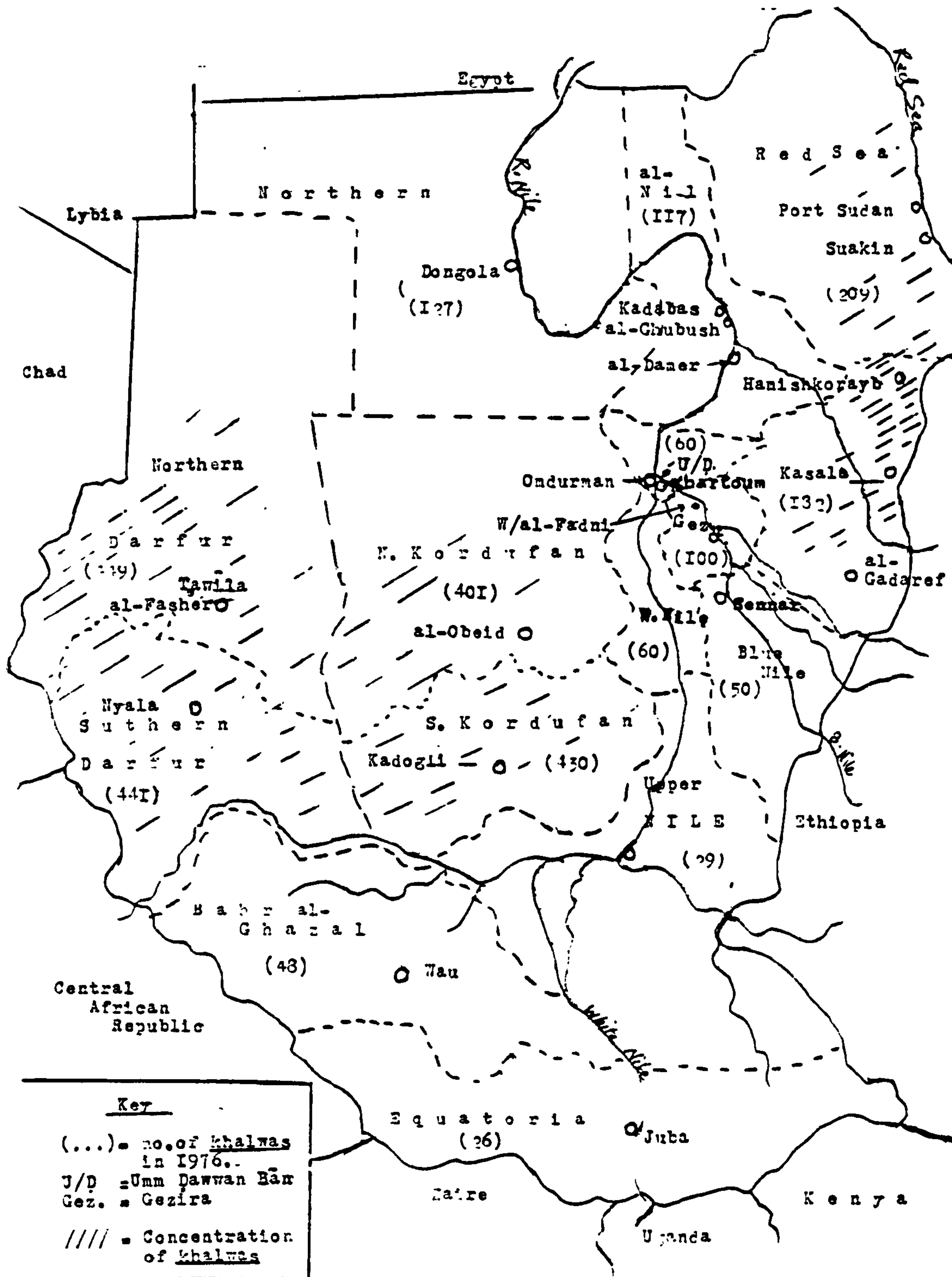
Map of the Sudan showing khalwa spread during the Funj Period



The khalwas were concentrated along the Nile and across the Gezira north of Sennar.

Appendix II

Map of the Sudan illustrating khalwa distribution at the present time - mainly concentrated in Western and Eastern Sudan.



Appendix III

List of persons concerned with khalwas met by the writer on his investigation about the khalwas in the Sudan during the period September-December, 1981.

Khartoum:

Dr. Yūsuf al-Khalīfa Abū Bakr, ex-Director, the Supreme Council for Religious Affairs.

The Department of Religious Studies:

al-Shaykh 'Uthmān Mansūr al-Bārūdī, Deputy Director of the Department;

al-Shaykh Hāmid Daw' al-Bayt, Chief Inspector at the Department.

Sayyid 'Abdallāh al-Bashīr, National Council for Arts.

Khalwas of Northern Sudan:

The khalwa of al-Ghubush: al-Khalīfa Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mājid.

The khalwa of al-Majādhīb (al-Damer):

al-khalīfa Majdhūb Muḥammad al-Amin;

ustādh Majdhūb al-Naqar al-Tāhir (a descendant of al-Majādhīb, Headmaster, Secondary School, al-Damer).

The khalwa of Kadabās:

al-Shaykh Hājī Ḥamad b. Muḥammad al-Ja'alī, Khalīfa of the khalwa since 1978;

'Abd al-Ghaffar Hājī Ḥamad al-Ja'alī, uncle of the Khalīfa, about eighty years old;

al-fakī 'Alī Dudū, the khalwa fakī since 1941;

ustādh 'Alī Muḥammad al-Ja'alī, brother of the Khalīfa and headmaster of the Secondary Religious Institute for boys at Kadabās. He was well informed about the history of the family and the khalwa and was the chief assistant of his brother - the khalīfa. He was the main source of information to the writer about the khalwa of Kadabas.

Khalwas of Central Sudan:

The khalwa of Abū Qurūn:

al-Shaykh al-Jaylī Muḥammad Abū Qurūn, khalīfa of the khalwa;
al-fakī 'Awad al-Karīm Muḥammad Ḥasan;
al-fakī Balla.

The khalwa of Umm Dawwan Bān:

al-khalīfa Yūsuf b. 'Umar;
al-fakī 'Alī b. Sālih;
al-fakī 'Uthmān wad al-Ḥudūr;
al-fakī Ḥasb al-Rasūl 'Abbas.

The khalwa of Tayba:

al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Dūsūqī b. al-Shaykh al-Zayn, khalīfa
of the khalwa (1981);
al-Nu'mān b. al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm;
al-fakī Najm al-Dīn;
Muḥammad b. al-fakī Aḥmad.

The khalwa of Kutrānj:

ustādh Muṣṭafa 'Abdallāh Nūr.

The khalwa of Wad al-Fādnī:

al-khalīfa al-Rayyāḥ al-fakī Ḥamad al-Nīl;

assistants (or halqa Shaykhs):

al-Ḍay ‘Alī Sālīm;

Ṣāliḥ Muḥammad Ibrāhīm;

al-Ṭayyib Muḥammad Ḥammad.

The khalwa of Wad al-Maqbūl:

al-fakī Aḥmad wad al-Maqbūl, founder and Shaykh of the
khalwa.

Khalwas of Eastern Sudan:

Kasala - Eastern Region H.Q.:

Sayyid Muḥammad al-Amin Ḥamad (Regional Minister for Services);

Sayyid ‘Abbās Sa‘d Muḥammad Aḥmad (Assistant Governor for
Religious Studies).

The khalwa of al-Sūfī al-Azraq:

ustādh ‘Uthmān ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azraq, khalīfa of the
khalwa (1981).

The khalwa of Hamishkorayb:

al-fakī al-Ṭāhir Abū Bakr Muḥammad Maḥmūd (in charge of
women's khalwas);

al-fakī Ṭāhā Aḥmad Ṭāhā (Deputy, in charge of the khalwas
of ‘Alī Bitāī).

The khalwa of Awdī:

al-fakī ‘Alī Muḥammad Ṭāhir Idrīs.

The khalwa of Tawayayt:

al-fakī 'Alī Muḥammad Dunwīr.

Khalwas of Dārfūr:

Al-Fashir/Dārfūr Province:

Sayyid 'Abd al-Mājid Ismā'īl, (ex-khalwa graduate, teacher and ex-Inspector of Education);

Sayyid Abū Bakr 'Alī Najm al-Dīn (sharī'a judge, ex-muhājir student);

Dr. 'Alī al-Ḥājī (Regional Minister for Services);

Sayyid Muḥammad 'Abdallāh Sharif (Regional Minister for Administration);

ustādh Sa'd al-Dīn Ibrāhīm (teacher at al-Ma'had al-'Ilmi al-Fashir, ex-student at the khalwa of Jadīd al-Sayl).

Al-Fashir, Department of Religious Studies:

Sayyid 'Alī Ḥasabū, (Assistant Governor for Religious Affairs);

Sayyid Hasan 'Abd al-Majīd (Deputy, Department of Religious Affairs, ex-nizāmiyya student).

Al-Fashir - the khalwa of al-fakī Sulaymān:

al-fakī al-Ṭahir 'Abdallāh ' Abd al-Rāfi' (Jiddu) (ex-teacher at the above mentioned khalwa).

Al-Fashir - the khalwa of al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsa:

al-fakī Muḥammad Nūr 'Īsa.

Al-Fashir, the khalwa of Babikir Nahār:

al-fakī Muḥammad Yahya Sirāj.

The khalwa of Ṭawīla:

al-fakī ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Harūn;

al-fakī Bashīr Fadl.

The khalwa of al-muhājirīn at Nāmī, Ṭawīla District:

al-fakī ‘Abd al-Mūlā Idrīs Abū ‘Ushar;

assistants:

Aḥmad Babikir al-Ṣiddīq;

Ishāq Idrīs Abū ‘Ushar.

The khalwa of al-Ni‘ma village:

al-fakī Yahya Fadl.

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1942-1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950-51,

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